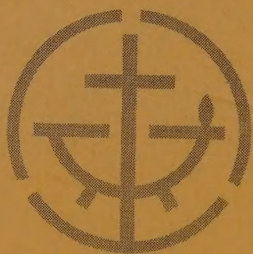


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THE DAYS OF LUTHER.

VOL. II.

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COUNT ARENSBERG;

OR,

THE DAYS OF MARTIN LUTHER.

BY JOSEPH SORTAIN, A.B., 1809-1860.
OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

"Oh, how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men, long oppress'd,
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might,
* * * * *
With plain heroic magnitude of mind!"

MILTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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COUNT ARENSBERG;

OR,

THE DAYS OF MARTIN LUTHER.

CHAPTER I.

IMMEDIATELY upon that elevation of their master to the Imperial throne to which the Elector had contributed so mainly, the ministers of Charles V., who were in the neighbourhood of the Diet, adopted every possible mode of showing Frederick of Saxony both gratitude and deference. At first, and at the suggestion of their own mercenary souls, they begged his acceptance of 100,000 florins—the payment for a vote that had been given out of the purest patriotism. And when it was scornfully declined, they sought leave to distribute it among his court! This also was refused, and even more indignantly; nay, with the added threat, that whosoever of his servants received aught of it should be instantly dismissed.

But to pass to what more directly concerns our tale. Soon after the dissolution of the Diet, Count Arensberg was, for a second time, commissioned by the Elector as Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Rome.

As we might expect, the Count was far from loth to undertake the office. It would bring him, he well knew, into the neighbourhood of the Lady Bianca; and he argued that his high diplomatic position might enable him to befriend her father and herself. Further, his own mind, occupied though it had been by State struggles, had reflected much, while he said but little, upon the fresh and startling dogmas to which he had listened from the lips of Luther and Melancthon; and, with a heart still tenacious in its affections for the Papal See, he longed to renew intercourse with its wisest and most influential defenders.

Whilst he is journeying with his party towards Rome, we will draw aside and revisit Wittemberg, where Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, Cruciger, Carlstadt, and others, were again assembled.

Some of them had returned from Frankfort, after their acute disappointment at the Elector Frederick's refusal of the crown of Germany. Before they met together in the room to which we would now conduct our readers, each of them by himself, and also with one or more of his brethren, had pondered over the election of Charles V., and had speculated upon its possible results to that movement to which they were all so deeply committed. They saw that it would

be vain to conceal from themselves, or from those of the people who had given them their adherence, that a power, the highest conceivable, would be arrayed against their persons and their doctrines. They were not to be deluded by the reasoning, that as Pope Leo X. at the beginning of the Diet, had tampered with the successful candidate, the latter would therefore unforgivingly thwart the schemes of the Papal Court against them. They well knew the severe bigotry of education in which the Spaniard had been trained; and all the possibilities of a German Inquisition, with its confiscations, its imprisonments, its autos-da-fé, came before them. Moreover, that act of Frederick of Saxony which, while they failed not to admire it for its self-renouncing patriotism, laid him open to suspicion of indecision and half-heartedness in the cause of truth, filled them with alarm lest he should compromise his past promises of giving them protection.

A drearier prospect could scarcely be imagined. And it was evident that several of them had caught the melancholy that such a dreary and perilous waste was fitted to inspire. Philip Melancthon, for example, unselfish though he was, and even mighty in endurance for truth's sake though he was whensoever danger actually confronted him, was ever constitutionally prone to dwell on perils in the distance. He could suffer, when the enemy was flourishing his falchion near him: it was not his virtue to seize the initiative, and to attack that enemy "without the gates."

Martin Luther, on the other hand, while he was as foreseeing of perils as was his friend, ever seemed to catch inspiration and daring motives from the prospect.

The little band, under a full consciousness of the imminency of their position, was silent for awhile. There was no movement among them, save when one or more glanced towards Father Martin—partly with sympathy for him, as the one who was the most exposed—partly from a wish that he would be the first to speak, and so, they hoped, to animate and direct them with his spirit and his counsel.

“Why, my German brothers, you all look as woe-begone as if you were the friends of Socrates, and were watching him hemlock in hand!” said Luther, cheerily. “Wake up, Philip, from thy sorrow! Have I made thee promise to give a cock to Æsculapius?”

“Nay, good master,” returned Carlstadt, for Melancthon was too depressed to speak, “but can we shut our eyes to our many perils? Even Von Miltitz could not obtain thy person, so long as the Elector Frederick was the Regent; but where canst thou be safe from Pope Leo, now that the young Emperor will be sure to wish to soothe him?”

“Von Miltitz!” exclaimed Luther; “the Judas! the crocodile! the impostor! the liar! The villain little thought I knew that, while he was loading me with embraces, he had in his pocket seventy apostolical briefs for leading me bound and captive to that murderous Babylon. No, no, my dear Leo,”

he continued, snapping his fingers, "you must play the Italian somewhat more cleverly before you catch me!"

"God save thee, my dear master!" sighed Melancthon: "already thy soul is among lions."

"Not with lions, Philip," returned Luther; and then relaxing into playfulness, as was his wont even at moments the most critical, he punned upon his friend's native name. "If thou must deal in such figures, Schwärtzland,* pray think of the real tenants of thy patrimony: think of snakes and serpents—base, bad, slimy reptiles; ay, and think, too, of bats—blind bats. Such as these live in the Pope's Sodom. Didst thou say '*lions*?' Why, I would go and ask them to give me lessons. But no, Philip: we must now, all of us, fight with asps and adders."

"And be wise as serpents!" added Melancthon.

"Cunning! dost thou advocate cunning, Melancthon?" demanded Carlstadt, with warmth. "As for me, *I* will become no serpent-charmer. I will sing no hell ditties, I assure you. I will wear mailed boots wherewith to bruise the heads of the devil's brood."

"Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," meekly returned Melancthon.

"I would counsel you, Doctor Martin," said the rash and imperious Carlstadt—"I would counsel you, not like a Spanish matador, to beguile the animal into blindness by a scarlet scarf, but to take him by the horns."

* Black land.

“Thou art a fool, Carlstadt! albeit I know thou art both learned and sincere. Even if I wished to imitate your Spanish matador, have I enough of scarlet wherewith to make a scarf? And as to taking the bull by the horns, art thou sure they would not be the horns of a dilemma?”

“Take care, take care, Father Martin!” answered Carlstadt. “I liked not thy soft courtesies with the Roman Babylon, when we were at Augsburg, and . . .”

“And take care, sir,” answered Luther, sternly, “that you insult her not so foully that the whole world should sympathize, and then take part with her.”

Carlstadt rose from his seat chafed with indignation. He was about to answer; but Luther’s eye, half-commanding, half-mournful, silenced him, and he withdrew.

“There goes a man, Philip, so good, so popular in his faculties, yet so rash, so inconsiderate, that I foretell to thee he will cause us trouble infinite.”

The effect that Carlstadt’s behaviour had upon Melancthon was very striking. Hitherto during this interview he had (and there were many similar instances in his future as well as former life) shown little save mental prostration. His was a mind that made him far fitter to live as an intellectual recluse, than to come forth and buffet with the storms and tempests of men’s living passions. Yet this arose not so much from cowardice or weakness of character, as from his exquisite sensibility to the pain of giving pain. But no

sooner did he find his loved and admired friend, Martin Luther, made an object of insult, than all his gentle melancholy forsook him.

“Yes, reverend Father, he *will* give us trouble infinite; but it may be that he is a snake within our Eden, and, to seize his own figure, *his* head must feel *our* mailed boot.”

“That is more worthy of my own Melancthon,” cried Luther joyfully, “than all thy previous moaning! Now come,” and he settled to the desk before him with an earnestness that betokened business—“now thou art once more alive, let us work.”

He opened several packets that lay before him: meanwhile, Melancthon was looking on.

“Kind, and generous, and trustworthy, I am sure,” were his words on finishing the first, as he handed it to Melancthon.

“Ah! he is a noble and a brave youth, and a wise one!” he added, as he laid down the second.

Melancthon read the first.

“Frederick, Duke of Saxony, Elector, to Doctor Martin Luther.

“Our Secretary, Spalatin, has told us that, upon the election of our young Emperor, thy safety may be compromised, for that, although his Holiness was at first opposed to any such decision of the Diet, Charles may seek to please him by surrendering thee to his demands. But fear not, Father! Frederick of Saxony may be able to befriend thee and thy righteous cause

even more effectively than if he had mounted to the throne. Be of good cheer then, Doctor Martin, and may God defend the right ! Dated 16th July, 1519. Wittemberg."

"God will not forsake his children and make them orphans !" ejaculated Melancthon.

"Now read that," said Luther, as he handed him the second packet.

"The Count Arensberg of Arensberg, Knight of the Golden Fleece, to Doctor Martin Luther.

"I cannot leave home, on a second mission to the Holy See, without begging your acceptance of my best thanks for the manner in which you have responded to the friendship of the Lady Countess my mother and of my brother Rupert. My brother accompanies me to Rome, but it will give me the greatest satisfaction, and I am sure it will give the same to the Countess, if you will honour my house with your presence whensoever it may please you. And suffer me to add, that I hope I have caught somewhat of the spirit of our noble-hearted Elector, and that should I learn, whilst at Rome, aught that might be of importance to your person or your great purposes, I will take the liberty of giving you the earliest information. Castle Arensberg."

"Say not a word, Philip !" exclaimed Luther, as soon as he saw that his friend had finished it—"Say

not a word! There is no longer ground for pause or for deliberation. Vorwärts! vorwärts! Philip, and in the name of the Most High God! What! shall the men in the high places of the earth be faithful to us, and shall we who are the Soldiers of the Cross cry craven?

"I tell thee what, Melancthon," he continued, "had all the devils in hell been able to lead against us all the potentates of earth as their esquires, and the Pope himself as their chaplain, it had been our duty and our safety to have answered, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' I love this noble faithfulness in Frederick, and this ingenuous courtesy in Count Arensberg; but let us not lean upon arms of flesh."

"Then, Father, you will take no comfort from such encouragement as is here given us, though it be by 'the powers that are ordained of God?'" inquired Melancthon.

"Yes, I will, Philip; but it shall be just the comfort that a wise, but wary pilgrim takes from a cool breeze, though he knows that that breeze may fail him across the desert."

"You judge these pledges of favour and protection from the wise Elector and the young Count, to be like the morning cloud or the evening dew, dear Father," answered Melancthon: "so do I."

"So do not I, Master of Philosophy!" rejoined Luther. "I know the warp and the woof of which our Elector has been made. I have known him to act often as if he were beaten and on retreat, while in the very

act he was planning and securing conquest. So even let him appear to discountenance poor Luther by-and-by: I shall be sure he has only veiled his face that my foes may not see his look of love upon me. He is safe and fast, Philip."

"But you will not, you cannot rely upon Count Arensberg, dear master," said Melancthon.

"And why not?"

"Why not? Is he not on his road to Rome—to Rome, that can be as fascinating as she can be treacherous?"

"Philip, I marvel at thee. Thou art so ignorant, not of human nature, but of human life. Yes, Count Arensberg is on his road to Rome; but see you not that his eyes are beginning to be opened? He went to Rome before, and returned just as he went, save that her gorgeous ceremonies clothed her nakedness and foulness to his blind sight, and her paintings, and her men of taste and science, bewildered him. But he goes thither again, with his eyes *half* open. I want no more! That will be enough for him to see her. He will soon agree with Cardinal Bembo, that she is a filthy, stinking puddle, full of the wickedest wretches in the world.

'Vivere qui sancte vultis, discedite Româ;
Omnia hic ecce licent, non licet esse probum.'*

And if the Count should go to mass—God grant he may!—that alone will teach him. Have I not often told thee, Philip, that when I was myself at Rome,

* Note 1.

and I had to read the gospel, the priest, before I could get through it, would exclaim in his impatience,—“*Ite, missa est.*” The Count’s ears will be sharpened; and will he love Rome, or be deluded by Rome, when he sees her as she is? He will fly, as poor Luther did; he will veil his head: he will shake off the dust from his feet against her. Why, Melancthon,” he continued with burning emphasis, “I would not, need not, preach another sermon against Rome, if I could but make all honest German folks pass a day and a night there.”

“Are you satisfied, Philip?” asked Luther after a pause.

“I am silent, if not convinced, Father. And now may I ask what your wise and holy instinct would suggest for the future?”

“Wise and holy instinct! Ah! there again, beloved Philip, you betray the philosopher and—forgive thy brother—not the Christian. Thou naughty Platonist!” he continued laughingly: “god though Aristotle is of the old, drivelling schoolmen, I prefer him to Plato. True it is, he did weave webs, and mighty was he in the cunning of their texture. But, Melancthon, *they* did catch flies. Whereas thou and thy school are weaving fabrics out of moonshine, and whatever did your fabrics ever catch but dreamers? Instinct—no, never give me that: give me something shrewd yet practical. Keep Plato to thy class-room, Philip; and for life—for life’s struggles—come, let us have some good worldly-minded logic.”

“Spare me, spare me, Doctor Martin! or rather be

fair to Plato. He was no dreamer," replied Melancthon, half gaily, half in earnest.

"Did he ever *see* Utopia, Philip?"

"Oh! Father Martin, let us be serious: the times call for it."

"Serious! and am I not serious? What more serious than the practicalness of life and duty? I will henceforth abjure all philosophy, if it must make me put thinking in the place of acting."

"What acting?" asked Melancthon, with great deference.

"What acting? why, this," returned Martin. "Do you cease to amuse your scholars with æons, and monads, and ideas, and primitive beliefs, and what not. Do you, my dear, great, good Philip, keep them to the practical, the dogmatic, the unspeculative authority of God's Greek. Do you show them, as you can easily, that God's Greek is better than Plato's Greek. Ground them well in that. And I will be practical as well. I will work—work in the church, at the homestead, and when I bury, and when I shrive, and when I christen. Ay, and I will write, too.

"Philip, let us set to work and give God's Word in our mother-tongue, and to all our people. Let the Pope then steal a march upon us if he can."

"And will you, Father, take no steps for your security?"

"Yes, cautious Philip, I will take steps; for God gives us no warrant for faith, unless we use all means. And now, come, let us adjourn this subject."

CHAPTER II.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, Martin Luther had determined that a decisive conference with his friends should be holden on the morrow evening.

But what were the preliminaries to that meeting?

All the morning through—yea even, and more terribly, during the previous night—the soul of Martin Luther had been tossed restlessly by a paroxysm. Minds the most common can imagine somewhat of the helpless awe, and of the sickening dizziness, of a man around whom a whirlwind rushes and casts its coils, and whom pitilessly it bears aloft, blinding him amidst its irregular and incalculable gyrations. But who can consciously sympathize with the soul of Luther—who hath the power to do so—when there blew loud, and burst fierce, and then twined close round his spirit, winds that seemed to be supernal? Who but he himself hath ever witnessed, much less felt, convulsive strugglings amid the eddies of such air?

There seemed to him as if there were voices of that air speaking to him with cruel scorn:—

“Renegade of Holy Church ! thou wouldst, wouldst thou, defy its Fathers, its Councils, its Popes, its Master ? Thou wouldst, wouldst thou—vowed though thou art to battle for that sacred fortress—both lay a lever beneath the foundation-stone, and fling consuming brands into the chambers of her temple ? Thou wouldst, wouldst thou ?”

And then the voices became as if impersonated to the excited gaze of Father Martin, and his room was filled,—not with forms of remonstrant or gibbering demons, such as he saw in later days, and whose very forms enkindled his resistance—but with beings who had the semblance of angels of light ; angry, indignant, yet mournful, in their godly jealousy.

They seemed to grasp him, and he felt their very touch was irresistible. They grasped him, and in whirls on whirls multitudinous, and in mazes ever and convulsively intricate, they seemed to bear him aloft. Bewildered, at last—half-unconscious—he fell upon the floor.

He was half incoherent in his wanderings, when the calm Melancthon crossed the threshold of his chamber.

“A wandering star !” Luther was murmuring—“a wandering star. . . . And for ever !”

Such a phase of morbid imagination was anything but infrequent in the mental life of Martin Luther. It must never be forgotten in our estimate of this great man, that his soul was susceptible as a child’s to the fear of doing wrong ; that, like a child’s, his soul instinctively invested motives and purposes with visible

impersonations; that it gave its sympathies and antipathies to ideal forms of virtue and of vice; that, in its commerce with those forms, it would now be gladdened with all ecstasy and be filled with all encouragement; and anon, again, would be disturbed by every possible black conception, and be palsied by despair.

At this need we wonder? Did Almighty God ever give to any one who was neither prophet nor apostle, a mission more august, yet more terrible?—a mission more daring, yet more exclusively sustained by warranties that were purely moral? Moses—the inspired legislator and prophet—had to protest against idolatries; but the objects of his protestation were singled out by a Divine Voice that was audible, and the arm of protestation which he raised was nerved by the Divine power of miracles. Whereas in the case of Martin Luther, a man without the overt aids of inspiration, was called to defy, to oppose, the very Church of which he was a consecrated minister; the Church which the homage of ages had sanctified; which Fathers the most reverend (in his estimate) had glorified for its polity, and honoured for its laws; the Church which held the time-honoured prerogative of giving eternal life, or blasting with a death inconsumable! And, as he wistfully listened for some audible words of command, and put forth his arm for wonder-working, yet found it to be still only human, who can be surprised that his imagination even forced itself to create conceptions that might give substantiality to his thoughts?

And yet were they only pure creations? After

having eliminated all forms, there remained, underneath these semblances of physical life, existent and conscious forces of evil: the very demons that are satellites of the "god of this world, of the prince of the power of the air, who now worketh in the children of disobedience;" beings whose province it was to circumvent the plans of this glorious regenerator of the cause of religion, of science, of literature, of morals, of human freedom; beings, who held powers and capabilities of assuming the garb of ministers of righteousness, when they sought to seduce, or of avengers, when they sought to intimidate. And whenever before was their mission so critical? whenever before was a guiltier dynasty of professed godliness to be advocated, or more honest or more mighty assaults against corruption to be foiled?

Melancthon, on entering Luther's chamber, found him prostrate, and, from his knowledge of the language of Holy Scripture, easily connected together words that otherwise would have been incoherent.

"A wandering star reserved unto blackness and darkness for ever!" he exclaimed, thus linking together consecutively the abrupt words of his great friend.

Philip Melancthon, as we have said, had nothing of daring passion within his bosom. Timid he was in every aspect of his life, save when the command of some great moral law summoned him to danger. Then, but only then, he was as much undiscouraged in defeat, as was his more energetic friend.

Curious it may seem to some men, as they investi-

gate the characters of those who have been agents in the most important movements of the society of the past—but more than curious, highly instructive is it to the Christian student, to find that the two minds, from whom the emancipating forces of the Reformation originated, were—the one by the many ancient superstitions that remained within him, the other by his constitutional caution — apparently ineligible for the enterprise. Luther loved the Church of Rome; Luther clung to the Church of Rome. To leave it, and, much more, to oppose it, was to desert and to abjure feelings and associations that were parts and parcels of his own being. Thence it was that he never voluntarily left his Church—he waited until she expelled him. So, likewise, though from another source, was it with Melancthon. All his subsequent life showed how his disposition was to balance probabilities for and against a doctrine, and to hold himself in dispassionate attention while the beam of that balance was quivering; how, warm though he was in the most vital affections of the human heart, he could coldly, unselfishly, watch the inclinations of that balance. Then, too, he was a scholar—far more than Luther was. To him, the great intercommunity of men of letters presented, at that day, an infinitely more attractive polity than any formed by theology could proffer. The illustrious Erasmus was playing fair dalliance with the Popedom; and that Popedom was putting forth its most lavish energies to revive those very sciences and arts, and

forms of literature, to which Melancthon was so wedded.

Then, again, the innumerable conflicts of thought among the ancients, of which his vast learning apprized him; his familiarity with arguments, for and against, any special conclusion; his broad, unprofessional survey of human nature, thencefrom inferring painful estimates as to the power and weakness of moral convictions; these, all these, accustomed him to a feeling of reluctance and incertitude.

“A wandering star!” he exclaimed, rushing forwards to raise his half-conscious friend. “A wandering star! Perchance so—yet, dear Father Martin, thou hast moved out of thine orbit only that thou mightest get the nearer to the beauty, and the light, and the purity, of the Sun of Righteousness! A wandering star! Say, rather, a force centripetal hath called thee off from thy path, Father!”

The suddenness of revulsion from horror and despair to a condition of peace and confidence was, throughout his whole life, a striking feature in Martin Luther's constitution. It may be thought by his enemies to have arisen from his facility in assuming the most opposite extremes. It is thought by his friends (and we are sure their decision is more truthful, and historically more comprehensible) that his mind, being overcharged with vigour, thus naturally displayed its forces. The chamois hunter proves his vigour by the spring with which he bounds across a fissure on the ice-field; just in inverse proportion to his momentary alarm and de-

spondency, while he was lying exhausted and depressed, upon the lip of the gorge that had stopped his progress.

Martin Luther's reaction of feeling was just as full proof of bravery.

Melancthon was, at first, thunderstruck, as the friend whom he revered so deeply, and towards the deep permanent convictions of whose mind he had felt such homage, now rose from the floor, and with a placid face replied to him:—

“A wandering star! yet and yet to wander, Philip. Bless thee—but late I bethought myself to be some comet, or rather some momentary fire-work, charged with sulphur and from the pit of hell, wheeling along, whirling, now taking a curve into space infinite, anon starting off at some interminable tangent, yet doomed at last to blackness and darkness for ever!”

Luther shuddered, then smiled. Strange paradox! And Melancthon could not reconcile it with his own habits of consecutive emotion.

“But, Philip, thou hast told me of the whitherward of my course. Blessed—glorious Christ! thou Sun of the Universe—Sun of all mind—the Light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world; shall I, instead of being a shooting-star, be attracted towards thine insufferable glory? Welcome—oh, welcome, thy brightness infinite and ineffable!”

This paradox—this paroxysm—this leap from woe to joy, from despair to confidence, from mental paralysis to mental vitality—all these present a study for

the psychologist. They are true, however; and they are true, moreover, in conjunction with high intellectual power, sagacity, and uprightness.

After the above excitement had passed away, other Reformers entered. We postpone the interview to the following chapter.

CHAPTER III.

IT was in one of the cells of the monastery of the Augustinians that Martin Luther received his friends. First, there came Staupitz, the venerable Vicar-General—the mild, conciliating man who, while he had trained even Luther himself in love of personal purity, and in all his bold emotions against the general corruptions of the Church, was, nevertheless, the advocate of order and ecclesiastical submission. He tottered, for his age and infirmities, arising from his long and anxious life, had made him feeble. Learned he was; yet learned chiefly in patristic studies, which he had ever subordinated to Holy Scripture, and had ever controlled and modified by his individual aspirations after Christian goodness.

Martin Luther advanced to meet him with the reverence which his age and office demanded, combined with grateful affection for the person and the paternal and holy counsel of his Vicar-General.

Staupitz was followed by Gaspar Cruciger,* that

* Note 2.

very man who, among the Reformers of the age, combined such vast theological with vast profane learning. He was less versed in the literature and philology of Greece and Rome than Melancthon was; but he had read far more deeply in the science of Christianity. He was a theologian inferior to Martin Luther—that is, he was less familiar than was his master with all the complexities, and authorities, and distinctions, of Church questions—but he was a far more mature scholar as to history, and philosophy, and language.

This, therefore, was a most interesting assemblage. There was Staupitz, the more than bishop of the Augustinians, influential from his office yet still more influential from his knowledge of human life, and the sanctity of his character and conduct. There was Philip Melancthon, the lover—the devoted lover—of all the sounds and echoes of classical antiquity, whether they boomed forth from the Bema on which Demosthenes had thundered, or from the Forum where Cicero had appealed; whether they whispered amid the groves of Arcadia, or from the cave of Numa and Egeria. Yet he was in sympathy with the Reformation; for loving, as he did, the purity of Christian morals, and attached, as he was, to the great facts and doctrines of the Christian faith, he longed after, and he indulged the brightest visions of the day when a form of religionism, that had basely consecrated everything that was degrading in ancient life, should give place to a scheme whose atmosphere should both

give a truthful outline to the forms, and vibrate more authentically to the sounds of the olden majesty of a primitive Christianity.

Martin Luther, aided by Melancthon, was engaged in welcoming both Staupitz and Gaspar Cruciger, when Luther at length discerned, though standing modestly on the threshold, a youth whose age and dress were in striking contrast to those who had preceded him.

Glancing at Cruciger, and learning from that glance that it was desirable to give a welcome to the young stranger, Luther advanced forward.

"My son," said he, "wilt thou honour my poor cell, by entering and sharing in a monk's refectio?"

The youth, on this welcome, entered. He was attired in the dress of a young German noble. Booted and spurred, with his long sword depending from his shoulder-knot, and with a falcon-feather in his cap, his appearance amused Father Martin, for it struck upon his taste for the ludicrous as odd, that a cavalier, and thus undisguised, should present himself at a conclave demanding such maturity of judgment and such unworldliness of habit.

"Mayhap, my son, you are mistaken in thus coming to the cell of Father Martin," said Luther. "Still, suffer me to hail your lordship with a most hearty welcome."

The youth blushed. This his feeling arose solely because he now found himself in the very presence of

one whom the Count, his father, had taught him to revere as a Doctor whose knowledge and piety were transcendent, and whose courage in peril surpassed all fables or facts of chivalry.

"Reverend Father, I had not dared," returned the youth, "to seek your presence; but yon friend," he added, pointing to Cruciger, "hath given me his pledge that you will forgive me for presumption."

"Enter, enter, my son," exclaimed Luther, much struck by the bearing of the youth, and not a little pleased at the high nobility of his dress and manner. "And why," continued he—"why seek for an introduction? Are the students of our Wittemberg wont to think or feel that the poor monk Martin is so awful and so inaccessible?"—and Luther smiled encouragingly.

"Not so," replied the young noble, gaining confidence. "We are told—we, who are living in Franconia, though so far away, are told—that the great Doctor loves young men, and talks and even sports with them. But, your Reverence" and then he lowered his voice—

"Speak not in a lower tone," suddenly interrupted Luther. "These here are all earnest and loving friends of mine, and from them I have no secrets—none whatever. Dost thou come, my son, on aught that concerns my life, which to-day was threatened? Speak out, I pray thee, and I pledge myself thou wilt incur no danger."

"Threaten your life, dear Father Martin?" was the

one unanimous question of Melancthon, Staupitz, and Cruciger; and they all rose from their chairs and looked eagerly, and, it must be said, somewhat suspiciously, at the young stranger.

Luther smiled.

“God be praised,” said he, a moment afterwards, “that poor Father Martin hath friends so attached and anxious! Yea, indeed; yet never mind, dear Philip,” he continued, looking on Melancthon’s excited countenance. “I was, this morning only, walking in our cloisters, and a man, whom before I had never seen, drew a pistol from beneath his cloak. ‘Why walk you thus alone?’ he asked. ‘I am in the hands of God,’ I answered. ‘He is my shield and buckler, what can man do unto me?’ And then he fled.”*

Scarcely had he stated this, and while his friends around him were on the eve of uttering maledictions against his foes, the young stranger, his cheek enkindling, and with one hand upon his sword-hilt, calmly drew from his vest a letter.

“My father, Sylvester von Schaumbourg, hath commanded me to place this paper in the hands of your reverence. Perhaps it may give another aspect to your position,” he added proudly.

This was a letter from the above-named Paladin in Germany, pledging safety and sympathy for Martin Luther. It ran as follows:—

“Your life is beset with dangers: should the pro-

* Note 3.

tection of the Electors, Princes, or Magistrates, fail you, I implore you beware how you withdraw yourself to Bohemia, where, already, men so illustrious for their wisdom have suffered much. Rather come to me. I shall soon, God willing, have assembled about me more than a hundred gentlemen, and, by their aid, I shall know how to preserve you from all danger.

“ SYLVESTER VON SCHAUMBOURG.”

The circumstances amid which Martin Luther received this generous note were enough to try even his indomitable courage. What they were will appear from the scene that follows.

Whilst he was reading this epistle, both Melancthon, and Staupitz, and Cruciger, were intently gazing upon his face, anxious to draw from any of its changing expressions that might meet their eye, some idea of the paper he was perusing. The fair young knight, likewise, stole sundry reverent glances at the face of the Reformer, and he burned impatiently for a word, even a single one, that might authorize him to summon his troop to the saddle, to escort the great Reformer to his father's safeguard.

And there *were* changing expressions upon the forehead and the cheeks of Martin Luther. The first was one most difficult to keep him from giving utterance to it: his heart was touched at the chivalrous affection of Von Schaumbourg; his colour left him, and a full manly tear stole forth from beneath the eyelid, that strove by a pressure of itself to retain it.

The young soldier caught that eye as it raised itself upon him, and his strong heart was touched by its melting tenderness and gratitude. Luther's friends breathed at ease. But soon his nostrils became distended, and the lately pale face grew crimson, and the moistened eye was afresh dry and rigid.

Better still was this for the young man's martial spirit, and his hand unconsciously grasped his sword-belt.

Melancthon shuddered. The Vicar-General sighed. Cruciger remained thoughtful, but unmoved.

"My son," said Martin Luther, in a tone that was most kind, most grateful, yet withal firm and bold—"My son," and he laid his hand upon the young man's head, "the blessing of a poor monk will never harm thee either in the lady's bower or in the battle-field. Almighty God's blessing—not mine merely—be on thy head, and on that of thy brave father!"

The young knight had already bent to receive the benediction, and Staupitz, Melancthon, and Cruciger, had risen from their seats, and joined their palms in prayer.

Luther continued: "May the great God of righteousness and truth 'bless the lad!' May He bless him in his future hearthstone, and place around it a woman worthy of his love and children fit and able to emulate those graces which we beg thee, Father in heaven, to shed down upon him. Bless him at his table-board, and may his offspring, like olive branches,

engirdle it! Bless him in the battle-field, and may his lances never flash but in thine holy light, and ever in the cause of truth, and liberty, and Christ!"*

"What can all this mean?" thought the anxious Melancthon, as the prayer closed, and as, without aught of formal courtesy (for this the solemnity of the moment forbade), all silently seated themselves, and Martin Luther, covering his face with his hands, remained, for many a minute, in the deepest silence.

"Brethren," he said, at length, very solemnly, "let me bespeak your love and gratitude for this good young soldier. May he be ever—as he has begun to be—Christ's soldier! He hath borne—and he hath borne willingly—this proffer of safety; and he, you see, pledges safe-conduct to Christ's poor confessor. Shall I accept it? Yet, if I do not, still what owe we not to the far-famed Von Schaumbourg and to his son! Mayest thou fight the good fight unto the end, noble youth!" he added.

Then Martin Luther handed to them the letter.

"The journey, reverend Father, will not be long. And I brought with me that same horse which my friend Count Rupert sent me, when he started for Rome, enjoining that no one should cross his back save yourself," said the youth, with a quiet modesty.

Luther's soul—masculine though it was in courage—was tender as a woman's, and this fresh mark of delicate affection from the young nobles of his father-

* Note 4.

land, touched most deeply the heart of the rude miner's son.*

Yet, let it not be thought that he felt this because it came from men who, by birth, were noble; for, while holding—cherishing—every feeling of reverence for rank, as an institute of God, never breathed there a man less disposed, or less accustomed, to accept rank as the substitute of virtue; never breathed there a man more bold in the defiance of authority, when that authority had become corrupt, or more self-denying in his withholdings from availing himself of their patronage or protection when the sources were polluted.

The Vicar-General, Staupitz, broke the silence that had, a second time, ensued.

“Art thou, my son Martin, in great danger, here in Saxony?”

“Only in *this* danger,” replied Melancthon, suddenly, and with emphasis: “that Serra Longa, whom your Reverence knows to be the great advocate at Augsburg for the Papal Court, hath just written to our great Elector—‘Would that Luther found no asylum in the States of your Highness! Would that, as a universal exile, he were stoned before the face of Heaven! That would give me far more pleasure than if your Highness sent me ten thousand crowns.’”

“But that does not compromise the security of my dear son Martin,” answered Staupitz, calmly. “The

* Note 5.

Elector remains his friend; and what to him, or to both, are the wishes of such a madman?"

"But still more than that which Melancthon says, let me submit to your Reverence," interposed Cruciger. "His Highness, our good Frederick, has just received the most urgent demands from Rome, and they are all directed against our Father Martin. Von Teutleben, the ambassador, hath remitted to his master the Pope's demands, that Father Martin should be banished from our Saxony."

Staupitz mused and was pondering on a reply. But he was ever so calm and so deliberative, that Luther's vehemence, constrained though it now was and had been during the conference, at last burst out.

"Thanks—thanks many, dearest friends! Thanks, my Lord-General—my friend—my more than father!" he continued, reverentially addressing his old superior and ever fast friend. "I have but this day received from Steinmetz, the secretary of his Highness, the despatch which his Highness hath returned to the Pope. . . ."

"Rupert told me of it," interposed the young Graf incautiously. "His brother Arensberg is the bearer."

The moment he said this he felt that he had very seriously committed himself, and he blushed, conscious of his error.

Martin Luther smiled, whilst those around him were surprised and distressed.

"My young friend," said Luther kindly, "hath but been presuming that that is true which he and his

friend, Count Rupert, wish to be true. Blessings afresh be on thee, dear young lord, for thine eagerness in our fate !”

How very gentle, and how proof-like it was of the Reformer’s wise study of human character, and of the consummate prudence wherewith he conciliated and managed all the human forces that came within his range.

The young officer felt very grateful.

Luther proceeded,—

“ We all know so well the prudence of our great Elector, and we all know so well the obedience of Count Arensberg, that we may be sure the purpose of his mission to his Holiness must be hitherto unknown. Yet, our gracious Sovereign hath suffered me to learn that he hath played off the Pope in his own coin; that he hath met subtlety with caution; that he hath said, that far from protecting Luther, he hath always left him to protect himself; that he already had commanded Luther to leave Wittemberg, yea, even Saxony; that Doctor Martin would not now have been in the States of his Highness, but from the entreaty of the Pope’s own Legate, Charles de Miltitz. . . .’

“ So, brethren beloved—beloved more for your wisdom in righteousness than for your friendship for Father Martin—fear not. ‘ Clouds and darkness’ may be around both me and you, yet shall we distrust Him who once led his people through the cloud and the sea ?

“ Dear young lord,” he continued, addressing the

son of Von Schaumbourg, "think not Father Martin ungrateful to your noble father or yourself. Oh! think not so. Neither deem him hot-headed and perverse, when he begs you to bear back home his resolve to stand or fall upon the Saxon soil."

It were hard to say which feeling was uppermost in the heart of the young Von Schaumbourg—admiration at the sublime daring of the great Reformer, or deep disappointment that he had no chance of fleshing his maiden sword in the defence of so grand a spirit.

He rose to take his leave, and would have done so hurriedly, had he not caught sight of the faces of the friends of Luther. Their expression—for they had but one—was that of dissent from Luther's resolution. So he lingered from a faint hope that something might bring a change, and secure for him the honour he so much coveted, of escorting back to his father's castle the renowned monk.

While he was standing in uncertainty, the venerable Staupitz said beseechingly—

"Answer not so decidedly, my son Martin. Think again, how thy silence for some months may, possibly, put to silence also these clamours of thine enemies. And what so dignified a compromise as that of flying to Franconia? Did not our Lord and Master command us, 'If they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another'?"

Then ensued one of those painful instances that were too frequent in the Reformer's life, when the vehemence of his passion burst through all bounds; though

bounds of love, reverence, and gratitude. Ordinarily, the waters of his soul might be compared to those of some strong stream which bears submissively the checks of locks and water-gates. For, be it known, the mighty current of his brave heart often reposed in calmness before obstacles which it could immediately have broken through or overleaped. There, before those water-gates, the stream would remain for months in placid, lake-like quietude; yet, the moment that the slightest fissure in the breast-works opened, there flowed forth a rampant, a furious cataract.

The case before us was one of these occasions. The Vicar-General had been the friend of Martin Luther's earliest youth. When, in his despair of soul, during and after his noviciate in the monastery at Wittemberg, he was riven remorselessly by religious sorrow and religious doubt, Staupitz had given him counsel and sympathy, such as no one but a good minister of Christ could give. And Martin Luther never forgot the claims of such kindness, or the auspices of such sanction, save when his impetuous spirit effaced for a moment the records of his heart.

"Doom me to silence, my Lord-Vicar? Doom me to silence?" he almost shouted, and with so sudden a transition from his former self-possession to actual anger, that even the young soldier before him stood confounded. "Doom me to silence? Let them. I love not these conflicts. Only let me pass life as some poor, solitary monk, and I will bless mine enemies for my lot.

But then, they must be silent too. Do they envy me my position? Then let them occupy it for themselves. Would they burn my writings? Then let them burn their own. Ready—oh! how ready am I to retire to quietude! but then let them not teach that the Gospel should be quiet too. What—my Lord Vicar, tell me—what seek I? A Cardinal's hat? Pshaw! I seek for nothing; I seek not gold, I seek not silver; I seek for nothing that Rome values. I seek from Rome nothing save that it leave the way of life open to all the world. Menace me? Let them menace. Promise me? Let them promise. The one can never terrify, the other can never seduce Father Martin, my Lord Vicar."

Staupitz, that holy, venerable man, was deeply grieved. But, high though he was in ecclesiastical authority over Luther; though by one slight order, as Vicar-General, he might have consigned the impetuous monk to the severest discipline; though no self-reproach for cowardice in the cause of Christ, or for any personal collusions, made him seek a compromise, and be therefore loth to enter into conflict with Martin Luther, his son in the church, his pupil; yet he was silent.

Let us think for a moment what must have been Luther's feelings, when his sudden paroxysm had passed away, and when there came those most grievous of all remorseful emotions, those, namely, of having wounded a heart that is dear to us—a heart, too, for whose powerful impulses and wise promptings we have reverence!

“My father, my father, pardon me!” cried Luther, as he saw distress upon the countenance of his aged and wise friend and patron. “Do *you* abandon me? Abandon me, my lord, and I shall be a child torn away and weeping for its father!”

Let it not be judged that the above is a description of a weak-minded, emotional sentimentalist. Under a condition of society that is sickly, and therefore impulsive, there occur, too frequently, transitions of feeling which are as sudden, if not more so, as that one we have detailed. But be it remembered, that the phases of ill-health and the phases of strong-health may often have a common solution. Uncontrollable impulses, made controllable, whether by superabounding vigour or by weakness insupportable, do often give birth to feelings of an order that arouses to acts that are as premature as they are imprudent. And then, in both instances, there follow revulsions which are just as immediate.

Such was the real history of the fact before us. In truth, we might say, that Martin Luther, living though he was amid civilization of the past and in contemplation of civilization for the future, was, nevertheless, a child. The incipient strivings of the great Reformation, within his bosom, were those of a young, a very early manhood. He stood upon his mother earth, with religious feelings that were of the freshest. These feelings were sustained by his recourse to Staupitz, his immediate superior, and to St. Augustine, the Father of his monastic order, just as ■ youth in human life falls

back upon those reminiscences (as Plato calls them) of some former condition of existence.

Thus, bursting forth into the theological heyday of life, who would not have been sure that this era of his consciousness and activity would have shown petulance and passion, self-reliance and, as ingenuously, self-reproach?

The Vicar-General still remained silent; mortification of heart came chillingly upon the ardent Martin Luther. So it did upon Melancthon and Cruciger.

They both, and naturally, would have been gladdened by some explanation. However, there was none.

"Reverend Father, may I return home to Franconia," said young Von Schaumbourg, "and bear back the sorrowful message that you decline my father's entreaty?"

This he uttered in a voice that came from one whose youth unfitted him to appreciate the real merits of the scene of which he had been witness.

"Pray remain at Wittemberg until to-morrow, my good lord," answered Luther mournfully. "I would to-morrow, and as early as you like, confer with you."

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Von Schaumbourg had left the chamber, Martin Luther returned to his seat, and with his hands covering his face, remained in silence—deeply agitated.

Had Staupitz allowed this to continue much longer, it is not improbable that the heart of his beloved Martin might have become proud and hard: it might, feeling that its humble confession had been rejected, have encased itself in defensive haughtiness. Not such, however, was the issue of the late discrepancy between them.

“My son,” said the trembling voice of the aged Vicar-General, “thou canst not think that thy father in Christ hath been silent because he is implacable. I answered not, while the youth, who has just retired, was amongst us; for I would not have thee humbled before strangers. Come hither, Martin, and let us pray for the strength of meekness.”

Oh! how much, during his after tumultuous course, did Luther owe to that moment! His enemies may not have exaggerated the vehement self-willedness and

vituperative fury of his character; but they have disingenuously kept out of sight that amenableness to gentle counsel, and that touching self-humiliation, with which those grave faults were interspersed. And much of these redeeming qualities he owed, through God's blessing, to the influence of Staupitz, who, like Paul the aged, besought for him that with meekness he might be enabled to instruct those who opposed themselves; that he might be gentle towards all men; that he might rebuke with all authority yet with love.

The prayer over, and all of them being again re-seated—

“And now, my son,” said Staupitz, with a mild, loving smile, “do thou enter on the business for which thou hast called us into council. Sure, our God has brought us together under the best of auspices, those of brotherly confidence and prayer.”

There was lying upon Luther's desk a large collection of MSS. To gain time for collecting himself, after such excitement, he began to arrange them in order, as if to read them, simply saying—

“In a few seconds, my father, I will obey you.”

He had soon attained his equanimity, and began:—

“You all know—and you all concurred in my so doing—how, many months ago, I addressed his most Serene Majesty the Emperor in a letter; what terms of reverent homage I employed; and how suppliantly I implored him to take under the shadow of his wings, not my poor self so much as the cause to which I am committed, and to shield it only until it shall be

found, on right reason, either that I am the conqueror or the conquered?" *

His friends nodded their grave assent.

"To that lowly letter," continued Luther—"to that humble prayer, that the lists of our field of combat might be kept clear—his Majesty will deign to give no answer."

"An omen of the worst," said Melancthon, mournfully.

"An omen truly, brother Melancthon," returned Cruciger; "but let us not be soothsayers."

"Why an omen at all?" asked Staupitz. "Why more than the natural result of the innumerable fresh duties of the young monarch? Is not his Spanish throne beset with murmurs? Has not Castilian pride taken fire at the thought that he himself will preside over Germany, and hand over his hereditary dominions to a viceroy? Let him but arrive in Germany, and have a moment's leisure, and then, if he deign not to give an answer, an omen is it, and a bad one."

"I have more to say, dear father," answered Luther. "It is not this offer of the brave Count Von Schaumbourg to protect me, that forewarns me of my peril. That I might have learned before, when Francis Von Seckingen, the hero of the age, the glory of German knighthood, thought fit to write to me—'My services, my wealth, my body, all that I possess, is at your disposal. Do you maintain the Christian faith, and in that I will defend you.' It is not that I am assured of danger, because Ulric Von Hutten, the poet,

* Note 6.

the great chevalier of this century, hath proffered me his forces with the words, 'It is by swords and bows, and javelins and artillery, we must destroy the devil's favourite.'

"None of these things move me, my brethren," continued Doctor Martin; and his voice and action became more fervid. "I will avail myself of no such resources, in order to defend the Gospel or myself against arms and carnage. It is by the Word of God that the world has, more than once before, been vanquished. It is by the Word of God that, more than once before, the Church has been delivered; and by the Word of God, and by that alone, shall its safety be re-established.

"Thus, then, do we stand. The weapons of our warfare shall not be carnal but spiritual. Let our enemies resume the arms with which, blaspheming the name of Christ, they slaughtered the Vaudois and the Albigenes; we will meet them; but it shall be only with the truth of the Most High God.

"And, whether it be from indifference, or from his innumerable cares for other matters, or from direct hostility, that his Majesty has disdained to answer the poor suppliant monk of Wittemberg, this I know, that the forces of our foes are already in the field. I know that, at the summons of the brute Eckius, their troops, in all their savageism, are already visible upon the hills around us, I have seen their advanced picquets. I know that their plan is to environ us. And shall not Martin Luther move while as yet their army forms only the segment of the circle?

"Here," said he, seizing upon some letters that lay before him—"here are advices I have received from the very bosom of Rome herself. You, my Lord Vicar, will not doubt them; for they come from our noble Baron Arensberg. You know he was despatched by our good Elector, to Valentine Teutleben, his Ambassador to the Pope. And you know Lord Arensberg's sagacity and dispassionateness."

"Advices from Count Arensberg!" exclaimed Stautpitz, and he stretched out his hand to obtain the paper.

"Yes, my lord," replied Luther, smiling; "and the postscript is from no less dear a hand than that of the young Graf Rupert, your own godchild."

"Pray, Martin, give me the paper."

It ran thus:—

"To the learned Doctor Martin, Professor of Theology in the University of Wittemberg, Saxony.

"REVEREND FATHER,—When I left our Saxony, our beloved mother charged me to communicate to you whatsoever I might observe at Rome as specially bearing upon the personal interest of your Reverence, and upon the welfare of that cause of which I myself know you to be so great an advocate. I dare not pretend to have arrived at any conclusion upon the merits of your dispute. Nevertheless, the wishes of my revered mother, together with my high respect for your own noble talents and your pure character, prompt me to convey to you some particulars that may be important.

“I would that it was in my power to send you more ample and more authentic information. But my duties here have been very many and very grave; some of which have been most exacting upon my time, for they have been duties in the service of our wise and good Elector; whilst others have been sadly absorbing of all my best emotions.

“I send you the few lines that follow, by the hands of one of my trusty followers, who tells me that he is known to you, as one of your own former students, and I know full well that he will not abuse the confidence that I thus repose in him.

“I have found this Court of Rome, Reverend Father, in a state of frantic fury against yourself. To give an instance, which, I grieve to say, may be taken as a true specimen of the general feeling: One day, at a large assemblage, I heard the Cardinal St. Georgio exclaim, ‘Were Luther but drawn from the asylum which the Elector Frederick gives him in his estates—were he but repulsed by all men, and stoned before the face of Heaven—that would give me greater pleasure than if his Holiness should give me the Duchy of Milan.’

“I cannot say that this feeling is cherished by his Holiness. The more I see and hear of the Holy Father, the more I feel assured of the generous clemency of his disposition; of his grave reluctance to adopt any measures that may be severe against you; of his love rather for literature and art, come they before his Holiness under whatever phase, Pagan or

Christian; and, therefore, of his intellectual sympathy with the efforts after knowledge which, I hear, he says you, and Erasmus, and Melancthon, are making.

“But, alas! the sacred college of Cardinals, and Doctor Eckius, your old antagonist at Leipsic, and the sneers of the priesthood at large at the religious indifference of his Holiness, are swaying him.

“I can assure you upon my knightly honour, that not many weeks will elapse, before your Reverence is excommunicated by a Bull from the Pope, and that that Bull will threaten your person with the gravest dangers.

“I am sure that in my thus forwarding you this secret paper, I am not guilty of interfering with the commands and wishes of our most Gracious Sovereign, our wise Frederick. Indeed, I shall give orders to have it submitted to his Highness before you have it.

“May the Blessed Virgin have you in her holy keeping.—Dated at Rome, December 15, 1519.

“ARENSBERG.

“P.S.—Dear Father Martin, the palfrey you so kindly accepted from me, will carry you nicely to Von Schaumbourg’s castle. It will keep up, I assure you, with Ulric’s horse, and I have sent to him to be ready at Wittemberg with his troop. Pray, dearest Doctor Martin, go to that castle. All the people here say you are a bad man, and that they will murder you. As to your being a bad man, I know better. And as to their killing you, my brother Arensberg says they shall not;

and I say, if they do, they shall feel my sword. I try to make Mellendorf laugh at it, but he will not. And dear old Essel has given up turning his gray moustache, for it is all of a curl night and day.

"Pray, dear Father Martin, do not forget to say 'Rupert' to the palfrey, and then he will be so gentle.

"Your loving friend,

"RUPERT."

The aged Staupitz was longer in deciphering these lines, than the younger men, Melancthon and Cruciger, liked. He lingered over them, chiefly over the post-script written by the noble boy to whom, at the font of baptism, he had stood as godfather, and whom he sincerely loved.

At length the document was gained by the two anxious Reformers; and while they were reading it, the Vicar-General said, addressing Luther—

"The youth's voice, my son Martin, is the voice of God. Fly, Luther! Stay not, I beseech thee! for peril is indeed afoot."

"Fly, my father?" answered Luther; "I have here," pointing to his MSS., "what will be a triple wall of brass. Fly? And why? Should my life only serve to the conversion of *one* man, I will gladly consent to martyrdom.

"But my Lord Vicar, and you my brethren, must now lend yourselves, for some few moments, to my purpose. And do you pray for wisdom to guide me, God's poor monk."

Then Martin Luther read to them that paper he had prepared in address to the people, and nobles, and princes of Germany—the profound policy, the high genius, the stirring eloquence of which no State paper hath ever surpassed.

Before we adduce some of the passages of this extraordinarily wise and powerful manifesto, we would make some observations.

It had now become a crisis of life or death to the cause of religious reformation and religious freedom. As to its being a crisis of life or death to himself, Martin Luther cared nothing. That he did not is evident from his whole conduct, throughout the many tumultuous passages of his great career. The advocates of the Papal Church charge him with a policy and a cunning that were as self-seeking as they were astute. To that charge we demur—we demur indignantly. Luther was no coward, neither was he a mere cautious diplomatist. Would a coward, or a mere diplomatist, have dared the whole power of Rome? Would such a one have shown, by bold bearing towards his Emperor, how little he sought from the wealth and resources of the highest earthly polity? If, on occasion, he met subtlety by caution, did this forfeit his claim to courage? Was Fabius a coward or a self-seeker, though he employed stratagems to circumvent a foe that would have entwined its coils around himself and around his country, if he had not met guile by sagacity?

We will never admit that Martin Luther, in the

sense of falsehood, met guile by guile. Of such his sincere religious convictions made him incapable. But he had to carry on diplomacy with unblushing liars, to defeat whom it was not enough that he should unmask their perjuries. And thence it followed that he was sometimes tempted to adopt a suspicious policy which, how dangerous soever it was in the sight of plain-dealing, was surely not the result of a self-seeking timidity, or a spirit of equivocation.

He had just finished reading his "Appeal to his Imperial Majesty, and to the Christian nobles of the German nation, upon the Reformation of Christianity." His three friends had listened to it with a gradually growing earnestness that had borne the reader onward in his equally glowing enthusiasm. Each of them had noted down upon his tablets the expressions that struck him as either deserving special praise or as calling for revision.

At length, said Luther—

"And now, my brethren, deal with me with a holy frankness, and condemn if you must condemn."

"Begin, Melancthon. Thou art the youngest of us," said the Vicar-General, when he found the two others deferentially waiting for himself to commence. But he said this with so severe a gravity that it startled all, Luther excepted.

"I have none but marks of admiration upon my tablets," said Melancthon, modestly. "This glorious manifesto is very perilous, but it seems to me to be the only chance of rescue for the cause of truth and for

the life of Doctor Martin ; and I," he added with an energy unusual to him—"I would sooner die than be torn from him."

Luther's eyes gleamed with a pleasure that lighted up and irradiated the tear-drop of grateful affection that hung full and round upon an eyelid.

"Brother Cruciger, what sayest thou?" asked Staupitz, still preserving the utmost calmness.

"That, my lord, if this noble paper be issued to my German brethren, its results will be irresistible. For force—for veracity—for precision—for brave, yet rightful hardihood—it hath never had its equal ; the people will all see that its author is no self-seeker, but loves them ; the usurpations of guilty Rome will, at length, be made patent unto all ; henceforth none will doubt that the Pope is Antichrist, and that Antichrist is the Pope."

"I grieve—I grieve most deeply," answered Staupitz, "that I must differ from you both, and, specially, that my poor judgment will so grieve my dear son Martin."

Melancthon and Cruciger looked deeply pained. So indeed did Luther, but unlike them (for they remained in silence), he quickly nerved himself to reply.

"Speak all—everything you think—my revered, my beloved Lord Vicar. Your reproof will be as excellent oil that will not break, but consecrate my head."

"I dare not acquiesce, my son," said Staupitz. "Would that my conscience would give me leave!"

“Does your Reverend Lordship object to the exordium?” asked Melancthon.

“Read it again, Martin,” asked Staupitz.

Luther read as follows:—

“‘It is from no feeling of presumption that I, a poor plebeian, undertake to address your lordships. The misery, the oppression, that at this moment overwhelm all Christian states—Germany in especial—tear from my heart a cry of anguish. I am driven to ask for succour. I must find out if Almighty God will not vouchsafe his Spirit to some man in our Fatherland, and will not stretch forth his hand to save our unhappy country. God has given us a young and generous Emperor, of whom we have the highest hopes. But *we*, on our part, must also do our utmost.

“‘Now the first thing necessary is, that we trust in neither our own strength, nor in our own wisdom. Let us but begin even a good work in the spirit of self-confidence, and God will abase and destroy that work. Frederick I., Frederick II., and many other Emperors, before whom the whole world trembled, have been laid prostrate before the feet of Popes, because they trusted in their own strength, rather than in God’”

“Stay, dear Martin,” interposed Staupitz; “nothing that I have ever seen, from thy pen, hath given me so much pleasure as this exordium. And I have asked thee to read some of it again, only because it gave

me so much joy. But maintain this feeling of self-diffidence and of reliance upon heavenly guidance and heavenly aid, and thou wilt triumph, for God will modify thy purpose, and then will help thee to fulfil it."

"Modify what purpose, my lord?" asked Luther with a touch of his old impetuosity.

"Gently, my son," returned Staupitz—"gently. What hast thou written about the Church?"

Luther read again a paragraph:—

"The Romanists have raised around them three lines of defence against assault. 1. Let the temporal power attack them, they answer, that that power has no authority over them; that the spiritual power is supreme. 2. Do we wish to regain the right of reading the Holy Scriptures for ourselves? They retort that no one can interpret them. 3. Do we threaten them with summoning a General Council? No one, they answer, can convoke a General Council, save the Sovereign Pontiff."

"And are you sure, my son," asked Staupitz, "that these answers are inadequate or untrue?"

"Sure? Yes, sure! my Lord Vicar," returned Luther. "Take but their answer to the second of these claims, the right of every human being to read the Revelation which Almighty God hath sent to him."

"That claim I solemnly admit, my son: and well thou knowest how I maintained it to thee, even in the earliest days of thy noviciate," replied Staupitz.

“Then, my lord,” exclaimed Luther, gathering himself up with all the ardour and concentration of a controversialist, “doth not that Holy Scripture tell all Christian men, that they are ‘kings and priests unto God?’ Doth this agree with the Romanist, who tells us that the Pope, the Bishops, the Priests, and all those who people monasteries, form the spiritual or ecclesiastical estate; while princes and nobles, the burgesses and peasants, form an estate secular or laic only?”

“A truce to controversy, my son,” said the Vicar-General, with considerable uneasiness. “There may be truth at the basement of such words as these, yet I like them not. They are perilous, and the time hath not come for their avowal.

“Then, further,” he continued, “how severe thy language against the Pope!”

“Let me read that paragraph again, father,” entreated Luther.

“Yes, read it, if thou thinkest there be a chance of my aged warning being heeded,” rejoined Staupitz.

Luther read:—

“‘A thing horrible it is, to see one who calls himself Christ’s Vicar displaying a magnificence that no Emperor can rival. Is this like the poor Saviour, or the lowly St. Peter his apostle? He is, they say, the lord of the whole earth. But Christ, whose Vicar he boasts to be, saith, *‘My kingdom is not of this world!’*”

Doth the realm of the Vicar extend beyond that of his own Lord and Master?’”

“ True — all true,” murmured Staupitz; “ yet unnecessary, nay, dangerous, to be told. Let the people but receive all this, and what will follow? Why, the sanctity of the whole priesthood will be set at nought. None will come to our solemn feasts. Men will raise altars (if they continue religious enough to wish to retain altars) in their own houses. Men will worship God (if all worship they do not throw aside) unguided by His ministers. And, alas! alas! the bishopric of St. Peter will become a bye-word and a laughing-stock for the ungodly. Spare us this, my son! I must not—I will not sanction it!”

Staupitz rose to leave.

“ ‘ If my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up!’ ” exclaimed Luther, in deep anguish.

“ Forsake thee, my son Martin?” returned Staupitz, with a voice broken by the force of tenderness. “ For-sake thee? Never! But I must away unto my cloisters. The surest love I can show thee is to retire, and pray that thou put forth no unhallowed hand to the ark of God. It may be it is trembling. Yet have firm faith that fall it cannot, for God’s own arm will keep it upright. Dost thou recollect Uzzah and his fate, my son?”

Here was another struggle for the Reformer. Had he been assailed by scoffs, by vituperations, by com-

mands, by threats from his superior—then his dauntless soul would have flung them off as summarily, and as unconcernedly, as the lion of the forest shakes off the dew-drops from his mane. But the voice of Staupitz was the voice of loving warning and entreaty. Well-read as Luther was in all the laws and chicaneries of the logic of his day, nevertheless his reverence and gratitude for his Vicar-General even blinded him to the weakness of the aged remonstrant.

His manly spirit was shaken—not from his purpose—not from the centre of his self-consciousness that he was in the path of supreme duty—but from his repose on human friendships.

“I know well,” he murmured — repeating words from the paper that had been discussed — “I know well that I have spoken strongly. I know I have proposed many a thing that will appear impossible. I have attacked numerous errors with a severity that is, perhaps, somewhat too rude. But how can I help it? Rather let the whole earth be enraged against me, than that I should displease my God!”

We must close this scene by adding that, with affection warmed into energetic words, Melancthon strove to soothe and encourage his great friend; that Cruciger, with somewhat of more reserve (simply because he was not so intimate with Luther), avowed his heartiest sympathy; and that, ere they parted for the night, it was resolved to give to the press that paper which gained an entrance to the palaces of monarchs, to the castles of the nobles, to the houses of

the burghers, to the hearths of the peasantry ; and which speedily set all Germany in excitement.

Other portions of it will come before our notice in an ensuing chapter.*

* Note 7.

CHAPTER V.

IN the last chapter, we found, from Count Arensberg's letter to Martin Luther, that he had arrived at Rome, and that there he had observed the most threatening movements against the person of the great Reformer. It was also hinted in that letter, that the Count had been harassed by other cares than those arising from his diplomatic mission.

We must now proceed to fill up these intimations. Meanwhile, our readers will not, we trust, lose sight of what we have already stated in regard to Wittemberg.

The scene to which we are now to be introduced, is somewhat different from that one which we have just left. It is not the cell of a monastery, although it is in Rome, where monasteries and convents so abounded that they gave a character to the city.

Strange resultant of Christianity, that Rome—once so teeming with the activities of life, of self-devotion to high patriotism, of stirring motives to human struggle, all of which, though improperly directed by an overruling Paganism, nevertheless kept man awake—

has been somnolent, and for many ages, beneath the wings of a professed Christian faith! Let the historical student recall that vigour of humanity which was once displayed in the Forum where Cicero declaimed, declaimed not merely to amuse his audience, but to arouse them to heroic deeds, or to a manly legislation; let him but evoke from the past the old Roman Senate, and listen to the words and vows of its great speakers; let him but survey in thought its legions, as they issued forth from its gates, warmed with high-souled enthusiasm, each soldier feeling that he had within him passions only to be controlled by laws that had been, by virtue of his citizenship, self-imposed; and then let him glance at Christian Rome, where there obtained vices as many and as odious as any that had defiled the city of the Cæsars; where, underneath the shadow of a sanctified Pontificate, equal sin and greater impunity flourished, because religion winked at crime; where almost every street was fronted and flanked by palaces that were dungeons, immuring sloth and spiritless formality, and often immorality—palaces that enclosed an army whose only virtue was to be a standing one: let him, with his mind's eye, bring within its horizon these two contrasts, and he will remain sad and perplexed; for the question will arise within him, "Whence comes it, that the chief seat of Christianity is as bad in morals, inferior in lofty and energetic purpose, and more down-trodden in its corrupt population, than ever was the chief seat of Roman Paganism?"

A sad fact is this! And the solution of this question cannot be found either in the natural deterioration of the people, or in the irruptions of barbarians from the north; but in the melancholy truth that a corrupt form of Christianity made the progress of social putrefaction more rapid and more complete.

We have left Wittemberg, where, it must be admitted, there was immorality enough and ignorance enough, but where there were aspirations after truth and goodness of the highest kinds. We have now reached Rome, where, though ruled over by a successor of St. Peter, and with its every alley and every palace permeated by streams of a Christian priesthood, sin was neither cleansed away nor even loathed, and where the knowledge that was panted after was not the knowledge of a divine Saviour, but of the gods and goddesses, the sylphs and fairies, of a former heathendom.

We are in one of the chambers of the Saxon Ambassador, Valentine Teutleben. We see before us a select number of guests assembled at dinner, in honour of the arrival of Count Arensberg, the Envoy Extraordinary of the Elector. The repast is just finished, and their host, the Ambassador, has just proposed the health of their Sovereign, Frederick the Wise.

"You were at Frankfort, were you not," asked Teutleben of Arensberg, "when our gracious master refused the crown of Germany?"

"I was, my lord," returned Arensberg; "and a sight

it was of such heroic nobleness as the world never before witnessed!"

"Sorry for it!" exclaimed Wolfram, an old, blunt-spoken Saxon knight.

"Sorry for it?" impatiently demanded Teutleben. "Why, you would not have his Grace to be set up to be baited by a whole pack of Lutheran hounds. Der Teufel! I love our master. I would not care to have him badgered by those accursed Moslems. Thou, Wolfram, wouldst have helped him to destroy them. But it had sorely grieved me if his wisdom had to save the Empire in a conflict with low, canting, boorish hypocrites."

"Then you think, my lord," asked Arensberg quietly, "that these low, canting, boorish hypocrites, as your Excellency calls them, are strong enough to make head even against an Emperor?"

"Indeed!" cried the Ambassador, raising his eyes in astonishment, and laughing. "They find favour in your eyes, do they? In the eyes of Count Arensberg—the gay, the frank, open-hearted Arensberg? In the eyes of Arensberg"—and then he looked at him in the spirit of provoking badinage—"who, report saith, is over head and ears in love with a fair ward of Mother Church?"

Count Arensberg's countenance fell instantly. One moment before and it was beaming, now it became pale yet dark. He was deeply wounded at the gross untimeliness of the jest, and that jest grated upon feelings that had been torn with anxiety all that morning.

All the guests, with one exception, both knew and

admired Arensberg : all the guests maintained a silence that was expressive of courteous dissent from the flippancy of their host.

But Teutleben, though his keen eye noticed the ill impression of his sally, was too stubborn to apologize. Nay, more, he felt uneasy that the wise Frederick should have thought it necessary to send an envoy, and there was more real malice in his gibe than Arensberg, or most of those who were at table, even surmised.

The silence was becoming awkward, when Arensberg prudently broke it, by starting another and a very different topic of conversation.

“ Will your Excellency suffer me to propose the health of his Holiness ? ”

“ Right willingly, my lord,” returned the Ambassador. “ And would that I had a flask of old Falernian for the drinking ! Sing us a song, Signor Varini. I have learned more of old Horace since I have been immured here, than I ever thought could have penetrated through my skull of parchment.”

While the guests were employed upon this toast, Count Arensberg was startled when a low, exquisite voice began, in recitative, the following ode of Horace :—

“ With glasses, made for gay delight,
’Tis Thracian, savage rage to fight :
With such intemperate, bloody fray
Fright not the modest god away.
Monstrous ! to see the dagger shine
Amid the cheerful joys of wine.

Here bid this impious clamour cease,
And press the social couch in peace.
Say, shall I drink this heady wine
Prest from the rough Falernian vine?" *

Count Arensberg looked, and looked again at the singer. He was seated at the same table; therefore, Arensberg concluded he must be one of his own Saxon land. "And yet," he said to himself, "I have often before heard that voice, and from a person vastly different in appearance. Ah! I have it. Is he not the shaven scoundrel that accompanied Lord Adrian, the Cardinal? But here he is a perfumed layman."

He restrained all expressions of surprise, resolving, however, most vigilantly to watch the Canon's movements.

"Thanks! Signor Varini," exclaimed the ambassador, as the song closed. "By-the-by, have you seen Doctor Eckius to-day?"

"I have not, your Excellency," replied Varini (for by this feigned name we must call the Canon). "Doctor Eckius," he continued, and in a voice so well dissembled that Arensberg began to doubt his own suspicions—"Doctor Eckius, ever since we arrived here, has been so engaged with the sacred conclave, that scarcely any of his suite have seen him."

"Ha!" exclaimed Arensberg, with well-affected wonder. "Is Doctor Eckius here? The last time I saw him, was during his grand tournament at Leipsic."

* Hor. Od. xxvii., lib. i., Francis's Translation.

“His tournament at Leipsic?” cried old Wolfram, laughingly. “What! have our reverend fathers then taken the lance in hand?”

“Lance of the tongue, Wolfram,” answered Arensberg, with a smile.

“Humph!” growled the old knight. “I wish they would lay that lance aside rather!”

“Heresy! Heresy!” shouted the merry cavaliers around the table.

The grim old warrior was as choleric as he was open-hearted, and he took fire at the banter.

“Then call it heresy, if you will, my brethren!” he retorted fiercely. “If Lord Arensberg referred (which I suppose he did) to priests’ quarrels, I wish they would leave our fair Saxony in peace; or, at least, let the reverend fathers of other lands suffer us to fight and then make it up among ourselves, without their cursed interference.”

“Nonsense! Wolfram,” said the ambassador. “Do you know that Doctor Eckius was the challenged, not the challenger; and, beaten as we were, we owe it to our knightly courtesy not to insult our conqueror.”

“Not *beaten*, methought, may it please your Excellency,” said Arensberg. “Neither was Doctor Eckius the challenged, but the challenger, if I heard rightly.”

“What do you call beaten, my Lord Arensberg?” demanded Teutleben. “Did not the faculty of Paris—did not that of Louvain—did not that of Cologne—condemn Luther’s propositions, and so award the victory to Doctor Eckius?”

"True, your Excellency. They did condemn Martin Luther, but (and do not think that I am a convert to Martin Luther, for I am not) as far as I can judge, Doctor Eckius did not beat either him, or Carlstadt or Melancthon—two others that were with him."

"Three against one? Ah! that was not fair, Arensberg," said Wolfram.

"Not so: Eckius had all the doctors of Leipsic, and the Bishop of Ingoldstadt, to help him."

"More unfair than ever! but on the other side," returned Wolfram. "And you say, my lord, that Luther was not beaten after all?"

"Not if I might presume to be a judge of men's outward looks and movements, without entering (which I would not) into the merits of the battle. If a man reels in his saddle, I can see that he has met a home-thrust, whether he be the champion of the right or of the wrong. And I saw Eckius reel often—Luther never.

"And what would *you* say, Wolfram," continued Arensberg, "if, after the *melée*, crowds on crowds rushed to the pavilion of one knight, while the other was allowed to retire in silence? When I left Saxony, even Poleander, Eckius's own secretary and disciple and friend, had gone over to the side of Luther. So had George of Anhalt. And as to the students who had flocked to the fight from Erfurt and from Ingoldstadt, so many have left their universities and sought for Luther's teaching, that Wittemberg has already doubled its numbers. Is that being *beaten*, Wolfram?"*

* Note 8.

“Wait—wait a little, my Lord Arensberg,” interrupted the Ambassador. He said this in a tone which could not be mistaken. It seemed to involve some dark and hidden certainty of the ultimate discomfiture of Martin Luther. And it approached so near to a warning to drop the subject, that it was followed by an immediate and unpleasant silence.

The remainder of the evening was diversified by other topics; but we need not enter on them, as they are foreign to our tale.

CHAPTER VI.

THE same day, on which the Saxon Ambassador had given a feast in honour of Count Arensberg, was witness of another scene—one far more important to the interests of Martin Luther. It even affected, and still affects, all Christendom.

Our readers will have gathered from the former chapter, that Dr. Eckius, Professor in the University of Ingoldstadt, had no great grounds for complacency in the result of his ecclesiastical tournament with Carlstadt, and Luther, and Melancthon, in the presence of the university of Leipsic. The judges of the lists had indeed accorded him the victory; but all men knew that their own prejudices had suborned them in favour of the Papal champion. Eckius himself was well aware of it; and their suffrages, thus obtained, could not soothe those irritating wounds which Luther had so trenchantly inflicted, and which the scorn of thousands of the German people, both of the noble, the learned, and the plebeian, kept bare and open.

Furious was this self-same Eckius: very furious was he, especially, because the young layman, Melancthon,

had exposed his bad logic and his worse Greek. And grasping in his rage after other weapons—weapons forbidden by the laws of the aforesaid tournament—he repaired to Rome, and resolved not to leave it until he obtained *force* with which to crush his brave antagonists.

Day after day was he employed in preaching his crusade. Hordes of monks and priests listened to him, and some, stung by his details of the foul contumelies heaped upon them by Martin Luther, and others, roused by a less selfish jealousy for their Church, demanded of his Holiness to proclaim war to the knife with the blaspheming heretic.

Day after day he gained access to Bishops of power and Cardinals of weight with Christ's Vicar; but with them he found far greater difficulty. How could they withdraw attention from some fine old antique, or from some fresh discovered Pagan manuscript, or from some grand fête, or from some new mistress, to think of the insane bletherings of a Transalpine monk?

Still his perseverance was indomitable, and at last he so wrought upon their fears that they beset Pope Leo with entreaties; and, in fine, the great Sybarite summoned a consistory, and commanded that Eckius should be heard.

We have already given a description of such an ecclesiastical assemblage; we need now, therefore, do no more than signalize what was peculiar to the present one, both as to its preliminaries and its appearance.

The day before, the Pontiff had been taking even more than his accustomed diversion in hunting over the fields of the Campagna. Returning late in the evening, jaded and only quickened to occasional vivacity by the movements of his favourite hawks and hounds, Cardinal S. Georgio (he who had been so deeply implicated in the conspiracy against his life, but whom he had restored to his confidence) approached him.

“Will it please your Holiness that I summon a consistory for to-morrow?”

“Down! down, Hector!” exclaimed the Pontiff to a large wolf-dog, whom he much cherished, and who, notwithstanding the fatigues of the day, was constantly leaping up to gain some notice from his sacred master. “Down, I say!”

S. Georgio looked at his Holiness with a surprised smile.

“Did your Eminence speak to us?” asked Leo; and, while asking, he scrutinized the face of the Cardinal.

“The servant of your Holiness but begged commands as to the consistory to be held to-morrow,” returned S. Georgio.

“A consistory to-morrow! No, surely not. We have to sing with Rudolphi; then we have to give audience to Michael Angelo, rude man! great though he is; and then, as your Eminence knows well—and we hope you will enjoy it—have we not commanded Battista to give us the *Andria* of Terence in the evening? We will have no consistory to-morrow.”

"Then may the servant of your Holiness humbly ask when this consistory shall be convened?"

"Ah! you beautiful, you brave bird!" exclaimed his Holiness, as one of the falconers passed on before him, carrying a hooded hawk upon his wrist. "Ah! Pschye, love," the Pontiff continued, and the poor bird, though bleeding from a frightful gash inflicted by the heron he had destroyed, moved and raised his crest at his master's voice. "Ah! Pysche, love, thou shalt be taken care of well. Thou hast done good work to-day.

"Your Eminence," continued Pope Leo sternly, turning to the Cardinal, "if we had but servants in the Church as faithful and as self-forgetful as these poor servants in the field, our sacred person would not be either so endangered, or so beset with the torment of little foes."

"Spare me! spare me, your Holiness!" prayed S. Georgio. "I have wept, I have fasted, I have done all penance for my awful sin, and"

"Stay this instant!" commanded Leo. "Doth your Eminence think us ungenerous enough to revert to the unhappy past? Did we not tell you that our morning draught, after your submission, was of the waters of Lethe? Do you so misbelieve us?"

The Cardinal was silent. Pope Leo was too generous a man for the Cardinal to comprehend.

To explain this ecclesiastical indifference of his Holiness:—Of course he loved his own throne. Of course he loved his own life. Of course, therefore, he looked

vigilantly at whatever might threaten the interests of the one or of the other. But, beyond this, what cared he? Nought. Let him but reign, and, while reigning, advance the temporal authority of his See; let him but retain and increase his power of patronizing science, of cultivating philosophy and art, of indulging his private tastes; and what cared he whether his spiritual dominions were kept in quiet acquiescence and subordination, or whether they were convulsed with throes and agonies?

“S. Georgio, we will have no consistory to-morrow,” again rejoined the Pontiff. “We must look to our poor wounded birds; then we must see our kennel, for I fear me some of the dogs are sadly wounded by that villanous Actæon; then we must have some hours’ practice on the flute before our master comes to us, and then; and then . . . but I am deadly tired, Georgio; do not bore me!”

“Nero played his flute whilst Rome was burning.”

“Did you dare to say *that*? Did you dare thus to add to thine other crimes this one of insult to God’s Anointed? Cardinal S. Georgio, did you dare to do so?” suddenly exclaimed the Pontiff.

“Nero played his flute whilst Rome was burning,” the voice re-echoed.

Then burst forth Pope Leo’s shrill, loud voice to all the prickers and huntsmen, commanding them to scour the adjoining forests, and to seize the blaspheming speaker.

“Suffer your poor servant to address your Holi-

ness," spoke the Cardinal, and in a tone so touchingly sorrowful that Pope Leo's wrath was soothed instantly. "Rome is burning, may it please you, though your Holiness, devoted as you are to high art and learning, knows it not. I have despised, as much as may be, the frantic nonsense of this low German monk—Luther, he is called—but, believe me, your Holiness, he hath flung a torch into our sacred homestead. Your Holiness can little tell what a flame is now rampant and devouring."

"Talk to us of that after dinner, good S. Georgio," returned Pope Leo; "we are too wearied with this day's chase: talk to us about it then."

"Nero played his flute while Rome was burning," again, and for the third time, broke upon the ears of the easy and procrastinating Pontiff.

"Georgio! didst thou hear *that*—that infernal voice?" said Leo, in the deepest agitation. "Have I deserved it?" he continued, with great feeling. "Have I ever neglected the best interests of our subjects? Have I ever shown indifference to their sorrows? Am I a Nero?"

The Pope and the Cardinal had, during this painful conversation, been riding onward, and they had drawn near to the Lateran.

S. Georgio was silent. The Pontiff became seriously alarmed.

"Answer me, S. Georgio!" he said in a voice of command, as every step of his horse brought him nearer to his home, and he began to fear lest he should

lose the occasion of such confidence with his adviser.

“Answer me, S. Georgio!”

“But defer all the other engagements of your Holiness, and command me to summon a consistory, and then your Holiness will know that I am no fool in awaking fears,” returned the Cardinal, with grim meaning.

“Then call a council,” said the Pontiff; “we give thee full powers for convening and arranging it.”

It was under these, and many similar circumstances, that Pope Leo X. was induced to meet his cardinals and bishops, upon that question which Eckius had, by his pertinacity and zeal, forced upon the Roman conclave.

It would be absurd to say, that the Pontiff had kept himself in ignorance of the state of affairs in Germany. Whilst monks, and priests, and bishops, and even cardinals, were in fury at the inactivity of his Holiness—whilst they were, all of them, indulging in irreverent lampoons upon him, because of his absorption in matters ultra-ecclesiastical (meanwhile, caring but little for proceedings that were anti-ecclesiastical)—during all this, Pope Leo was neither ignorant of Martin Luther’s movements, nor of their critical nature in regard to his Pontificate and Church.

But he was, in the real sense of the word, a latitudinarian. Therefore he felt, within his own heart, no theological impulse to destroy his foe. And so, looking at the conditions of antagonism with the bold Reformer from a purely secular point of view, he

wished to silence him by arts exclusively political. His own native inclination to kindliness kept him from wishing for a moment to use any agencies that might be cruel.

So it was, that when he entered the consistory, his Holiness was feeling neither merely the annoyance of one who was being kept from his favourite pastimes, nor that of one who was forced to attend to topics of a theology which he held in uttermost disgust ; but rather, that of one who held himself to be an earthly sovereign, with whom policies and diplomacies were the best weapons of defence.

The prayers of the Church were offered : an impartial observer might have detected in the High Priest, and most assuredly in that grade of ecclesiastics which was next to him, a formality of worship that failed to have even the low virtue of formality. It would have been deeply affecting to such an observer, that while the Litanies were being chanted, there were, indeed, the prescribed prostrations and genuflections ; there were, indeed, correct responses, without one note of voice breaking through the harmony of the supplicating murmur ; but his eye would have been able to discern no one muscle convulsed by penitence upon the face of the worshippers : it might, however, have caught a sight of sundry ill-concealed smiles ; it might have understood varied signs and movements among those devotees, as symptoms of impatience at the ceremonial.

Count Arensberg was not present. It was impossible that he should have been ; for the conclave was

purely ecclesiastical. But supposing that he had been, what would not have been the result?

Would he not have recalled the poor church at Wittenberg, whither his mother had led him by her entreaties, and where, notwithstanding his high aristocratic prejudice, he had been touched by the plaintive cry of the penitent, by the earnest adoration of the sincere Christian man, and by the honest, large-minded, harsh, yet truthful lessons of Martin Luther, of which that little provincial cathedral was a witness?

The prayers that preceded the consistory! Why, the Pope himself would have preferred offering an oblation to Apollo. The Cardinals, most of them (so history tells us), loved Paganism, if they had vitality within them to love anything at all.*

We may gather somewhat of the spirit in which many of this consistory assembled, from words which were uttered among several groups of its members, before the entrance of the Pontiff enforced silence.

"Tear a wing off from this vile insect, and you will soon see he'll die," said a lordly abbot, half choking with his rage, and, also, with his effort at speaking.

"Holy Church must be healthy in even her remotest limbs, if she would so use her energy as to secure vast and useful conquests for the future," said a severe-looking bishop.

"Mix up a little poison with the honey of the Catholic faith—that is, suffer even a small error to be

* Note 9.

fused with the truth—and the bad will transmute the good ; slowly, but certainly,” added a third.

But all this was put an end to ; for, as we have said, the Pontiff entered, and this assembly of ecclesiastics became silent and demure, and fell upon their knees.

Various preliminaries had been gone through, such as the calling of the names of the consistory by the secretaries, and the performance of homage by its members, when the clerk of the pontifical court proclaimed aloud :—

“ It is the pleasure of his Holiness Pope Leo X., that Brother Eckius, Doctor of Theology, and Vice-Chancellor of our University of Ingoldstadt, should first address you, our reverend brethren.”

It was a stirring scene, that which took place when Dr. Eckius, having first prostrated himself before the Pontiff, stood before this grave assembly. In earlier days he had been the personal friend of Martin Luther, whose respect he had conciliated by his great learning and great activity at the University of Ingoldstadt. This was during the time that the Reformer was an ardent student and admirer of Aristotle, and of that scholastic theology of which Eckius was a celebrated hierophant. But no sooner had Luther assailed the latter than Eckius flew to its rescue ; and then began a disputation which, though at first purely logical, ended in the severest bitterness of religious strife.

Eckius, as we know, had engaged in a public disputation at Leipsic, with Carlstadt ; but Luther and

Melancthon had mingled in the fray. In that fray Eckius had met with the most humiliating mortifications; and, both stung at his defeat and fanatically zealous for the Roman Church, he rushed to its metropolis, argued himself into the idea that he was a second "Peter the Hermit," though on a more vital mission, and resolved on preaching a crusade against the so-called heretics of Germany.

He had long been distinguished in his own land for his rare eloquence. And yet, it had ever been noticed there, even among his admirers, that that eloquence had one grave defect—one which unfitted him for being an orator of the highest class. That defect was this: instead of calculating upon the law of emotion—which exacts that its fire, instead of instantly bursting forth into a flame, should gradually acquire and reveal its ardency—he, the moment he began his speeches, glowed with passion. And thence it followed, that his auditory were unsympathetic with the speaker, for a while; and, even when they did sympathize, were aware (which should never be) of the violence that had been employed.

This fault, grave as it was during his earlier years of oratory, was even more exaggerated now that personal feelings were enlisted in his speeches. And never did he more unartistically betray it than on the present occasion.

"May it please your Holiness," he began passionately, "every attempt at conciliation with the monk Luther, and his fry of heretics, is useless. Vain dreams

are they which some men indulge as to this conciliation. They would not entertain them did they not live so far away from the spot on which I have been contending for Holy Church. *I* know the peril of that contest, for I have been left alone to struggle with the audacious monk. *I* know that we should hasten to amputate from our body this gangrened limb ; let us hesitate, and the poison will circulate throughout our entire corporation. Cut off this limb of Satan, your Holiness ! Burn out this proud flesh, your Holiness ! Destroy him !—and that without giving his wily tongue an opportunity of appeal.” *

Eckius would have proceeded further, and possibly might have done still greater violence to those conditions of calm, reverent feeling which the presence of the Holy Father prescribed, had not the looks of Pope Leo, and the murmurs of many of the consistory, disconcerted him.

“ Our children must never be deprived of their voice before their father,” interrupted the Pontiff ; and so saying, he shook his head with firm disallowance of the proposal of the frantic speaker.

“ We will hear this our Brother Martin for ourselves,” he continued. “ Signor Battista ” (addressing one of the secretaries), “ summon this Augustine monk to our presence.”

Eckius stood abashed : nevertheless, such was his hardihood and his spirit of revenge, he dared to remonstrate with Christ’s Vicar.

* Note 10.

“Your Holiness hath summoned him before; but he would not show himself. The Elector of Saxony aids him in his contumacy.”

The whole consistory remained silent for several minutes, after this unseemly infraction upon the homage which, whether the payers of it did it sincerely or not, had ever been shown to the person of the Sovereign Pontiff.

They watched the countenance of Pope Leo, but they could read nothing on it. Perhaps some of the wilier of the members of that consistory thought they could discern a slight enkindling of defiance, the moment that Eckius had so adroitly brought forward the name of the Elector, as that of one presuming to withstand the challenge of the Holy See.

But that silence was at length broken, when the Cardinal Hippolito arose, and with far more collectedness and deference than Eckius had manifested, spoke:—

“May it please your Holiness, your Holiness hath ever been the parent of your own people and of Christendom, not only by your own sacred right as the anointed successor of our blessed apostle St. Peter (to whom were given the keys of heaven and of hell), but by the infinite mansuetude and justice for which your reign will be distinguished unto the world’s end. Deign, therefore, Holy Father, to listen to one of the meanest of your servants. When our first parent, Adam, fell, did not Almighty God first cite him, before he uttered judg-

ment? ‘Adam, where art thou?’ said the Lord. And when wicked Cain slew his brother Abel, did not the Eternal demand, ‘Cain, where is thy brother Abel?’ Let the servant of your Holiness pray that you demand an answer from the monk Martin. Though he be refractory, our forefather Adam, and Cain the fratricide, were refractory likewise.”

The Pope nodded assent, and there seemed to be a pleasure growing upon his countenance.

“And then,” continued the Cardinal, encouraged by this proof of his Sovereign’s acquiescence—“And then, for this Reverend Doctor Eckius to presume to throw out before your Holiness that the wise Frederick of Saxony sustains this monk in his resistance to the authority of the Holy See! Let me tell him it is false. Let me tell him that he hath adduced this fiction for sundry revengeful purposes of his own. Let me tell him that, even at this very hour, the Ambassador of this wise Prince is still in Rome, as eager for the vindication of the honour and of the truth of Holy Church, as Doctor Eckius himself can be.”

The murmurs of applause and of disapprobation, in the consistory were divided; and Eckius began to feel alarmed.

The Pope reclined back in his chair of state with a quietude that seemed to argue that he acquiesced in the opinions of the last speaker, and was resolved to await patiently the result of his proposal.

There was a pause again.

"What say you, Signor Malatesta?" asked the Pope, breaking this pause, and addressing one of the greatest jurisconsults of the Holy See.

"That I, and my brethren around me," returned Malatesta, reverently, "are agreed, may it please your Holiness, upon this as one of our canon laws, 'that no proof of crime should be ever accepted against an accused man, without our having first given him a right of self-defence.'"

"Right, most right," rejoined the Pontiff. "See, Battista, that Doctor Luther be again summoned. 'The Servant of servants of the Lord must strive patiently.'"

The Pope was in the act of rising to retire. Glad was he at this feasible plea for the procrastination; for, hating from his soul all theological disputes, and looking with a lingering eye upon the fascinations of his life, which he had been so unseasonably called upon to interrupt, he hastened to resurrender himself to their authority.

But while he was thus preparing to depart, Cardinal S. Georgio rose and essayed to speak.

The Pontiff again sank into his chair, and he was obviously nettled at the interruption to his movements.

"Pardon me, your Holiness," said S. Georgio, "if I presume to delay our Holy Father. Our brother from far-distant Germany, hath been, I will allow, rude in speech and impetuous in demand. Thus he hath been, and so much so, that I wonder not that this sacred

college hath so summarily declined the proposals of his mission. Nevertheless, suffer me to say that these proposals are of importance, vital. I have learned, not so much from Doctor Eckius, but from other quarters, that the best parts of Germany are in revolt against the Holy See; that this obscure monk Martin hath been able, by his blasphemous daring, to poison the minds of thousands upon thousands against our Holy Father; that, whereas in the times of the blessed Pontiff Julius a million crowns were sent from each commune, for the erection of our temple, this shameless renegade priest so controls the people, that we have not as many scudi. In the name of high art, in the name of the blessed Virgin, in the names of St. Peter and St. Paul, I—unworthy priest as I am—conjure your Holiness to interpose.”

Pope Leo half raised himself.

“What says your Eminence? Have our finances for the erection of St. Peter’s Temple been thus signally injured?”

“Alas! they have, may it please your Holiness,” said the Cardinal.

“Then we care not for canonists,” answered the Pontiff, firmly. “This is a rebellion against the State. Are we to wait for a rebel to defend himself? Let a bull of excommunication be prepared against this thief and robber of the Church.”

“Deign to pardon me, Holy Father,” said the secretary, “but your Holiness issued a former bull, and this vile wretch Martin burned it.”

“Ah!” returned the Pope, “that was one too lenient: prepare another and one that shall be ultimate. Let him burn *it*, if he dare. There are other fires, and he knows there are.”

CHAPTER VII.

WE have been observing that great ecclesiastical scene, from the features of which none but the Omniscient could have foreseen the consequences of blind rage, unprincipled cunning, mad precipitancy, that followed. Martin Luther was excommunicated in the most determinate form and language. His works, his person, were devoted to destruction: the former to flames instantly, the latter to flames as devouringly, so soon as the Papal authorities could get hold of it.

What ensued upon this bold declaration of war with the Reformer, we shall see anon. At present, it is enough to say, that the challenge was forced upon the kindly nature of Pope Leo, who, goaded by the taunts and insults of the monks of Christendom, yielded up, in a fatal moment, his own large-minded and benevolent convictions to the dictates of men who have ever distinguished themselves, as much by their ignorance of the laws that govern the great politics of humanity, as by their forced and unnatural estimate of religious individualism—that is to say, religious self-apotheosis.

But during these moments—so eventful to all Christendom — Count Arensberg was engaged on other objects.

We have said before that, in his letter to Martin Luther, he intimated how anxiously he was being employed upon matters that were somewhat personal.

So he was; for no sooner had he left the banquet given in honour of him by the Saxon ambassador, Von Teutleben, than he directed his steps towards the castle of St. Angelo.

He had taken scarcely two steps beyond the portcullis of the palace of the ambassador, when his ear was met by the whisper of friends.

“Rosbach,” murmured a young voice, in a low tone.

“Deutsche,” was Count Arensberg’s answer, in a tone equally low.

These had been the watchwords preconcerted between the Count and his attendants. Rupert was among them; and, first casting his eyes around him to see that they were unobserved, he left the dark shadow underneath which he had sheltered his little party, and advanced to his brother.

“Mellendorf has gone on with Rudiger,” he whispered. “He bade us not move until we heard a low whistle.”

“Have you heard it, Rupert?” asked the Count.

“Yes, twice—thrice; and he must be impatient.”

“Then let us move onward, and that quickly.”

Calmly, in well-governed order, without even a whisper, did the little band of retainers advance to-

wards the grim donjon. They had been instructed by their lord upon the necessity of great secrecy, and, therefore, reached it without awakening the attention of the neighbourhood.

The wardens at the great gate gave him admission instantly upon his showing them the sign-manual of Pope Leo; and he was as instantly, and with great subservience, conducted to the apartments of the Marchese della Scala. Apartments they might be called—not dungeons; for, through the energetic good offices of Raffaello and Agostino Chigi, the imprisoned noble had found a more lenient accommodation than that which first received him upon his incarceration.

To these apartments there was an ante-room, and there Count Arensberg insisted on remaining until some others who, he was told, were with the Marchese, should have left him. And there he sat for a long half-hour, moodily thoughtful, but occasionally disturbed by the low, murmuring, unintelligible sounds that came from the inner chamber.

His high sense of honour kept him from even an anxiety to interpret these tones. However, he could not but be aware that they were not the sighs of a solitary prisoner—that they were the alternate questionings, replies, and speeches of several individuals.

Once, only once, some notes of a voice, that made his heart leap and then recoil, sounded so distinctly that he was sorely tempted to become a listener.

But soon this temptation ceased, for there arose separate and gradually ascending voices, each so loud

that Arensberg, without eaves-dropping, could not but hear them. He could mark their articulation, and identify them too.

“Never! Never! By the bones of my fathers! by the untainted honour of our ancient house! by my own heart’s love for my child! by the immaculate Holy Virgin—I say, never!”

Count Arensberg could contain himself no longer. Unannounced, unbidden, he burst open the door of the inner apartment, and entered.

The Marchese had been only half raised from his couch, during the above altercation with his Eminence. Bianca had been sitting at his feet during its earlier moments, but she had risen, and was standing erect.

The Marchese raised himself still higher upon his bed. This was wonderful as an effort; for his poor limbs had suffered, not so much from the paralysis of confinement, as from the torture he had undergone.

“Ha!” exclaimed he, “and am I to have the horrors of publicity added to those of the restraints of imprisonment, that you, my Lord of Arensberg, dare intrude thus?”

“Say not so,” implored Arensberg, kneeling at the couch of the Marchese. So wounded did he feel by this reception, that he forgot even to cast a glance upon Bianca.

“Say not so, my Lord Marchese. I have been here, in your ante-room, anxious for the moment when I dared hope you would receive me in your solitude. But I heard words of insult to yourself, my lord;

I heard words of threatening to a soldier in distress; I heard a voice of presumptuous insolence."

The Cardinal, disconcerted though he was, still kept his chair. But nothing could keep him from glancing thoughtfully upon the bold, passionate soldier; or from devising means wherewith to contravene that soldier's boldness.

The Lady Bianca had sunk down upon the stool on which she had been seated in attendance upon her suffering parent. She could only cast one look towards Arensberg, but he caught it; and its gratefulness, its pride of love, its eloquent command to him to continue, sustained him.

"My Lord Marchese, let me implore you not to misjudge this my intrusion."

He had to wait, however, for an answer.

"I was wrong, my Lord Count," the prisoner said at last. "What would you?"

"That you should command his Eminence to leave you, my lord," answered Arensberg, in a whisper.

"I wait for no such ungrateful—for no such mad dismissal," interposed the Cardinal, whose acute and vigilant ear interpreted even the whisper. "I leave you, Della Scala; I leave you, Signor. What if to-morrow morning the black dais shall absorb the blood of a guilty traitor! If to-morrow evening shall see your child weeping tears that shall burn as if they were drops of molten lead!"

The Cardinal retired from the apartment. It was time he did; for Count Arensberg had started from

his kneeling posture at the couch of the Marchese, and was roused to a state of dangerous indignation.

"His Eminence hath been disturbing you, my dear lord," said Count Arensberg, after the retreat of the Cardinal, and after some moments of embarrassment to the Marchese and his daughter, as well as to the Count.

"My Lord of Arensberg," answered the Marchese, with calm, severe dignity, "I thank you for the sympathy you have just now shown with my misfortunes; but forgive my rudeness. I ask for no protector either for myself or child."

Arensberg could not but notice the half-shudder which Bianca gave, as her father said so. The Count interpreted that half-shudder as favourable to himself, and he drew courage from it.

"Surely you, my thrice-honoured friend," he replied—"the friend who once so gracefully and with an hospitality so large entreated me in his house—will not look down scornfully upon me, now that I humbly aim to prove that my memory is grateful!"

"Pray misunderstand me not, Lord Arensberg. Here have I been immured for months on months; how long I know not, for though hence I can see the interchange of night and day, the poor prisoner soon becomes confused in his arithmetic. And here have I been—I, a noble of the State, and one who hath done some small service—first arrested (and the Holy Virgin knows by whom, or why, or wherefore), then challenged by insult, then buried in a tomb, then

threatened, then cajoled, then cross-questioned, then tortured (and that in the name of Holy Church), then transported hither from my cell, sundered from my child—until of late—without one glimpse of true human fellowship, save that of the great, generous Raffaello, and that of good, honest Agostino: thanks, eternal thanks, to the Holy Virgin! for the solace of their friendship has been a boon infinite. But here have I lain, Lord Arensberg, and I have been and still I am in torture. I could not mount my horse, were you to invite me to the saddle—the infernal wretches have broken my limbs—in the name of Holy Church, and for the purpose to force me to a lie! Let them try on. A soldier can know the obligations of his faith far better than can its priests, if this be their reasoning. And then—and then—there intrudes this Cardinal—foul fiend as he is!—wooing me with smiles and promises to tell that lie, and for the sake of the Holy See! And, Heaven help me! what more does he not aim after . . . ?”

The Marchese fell back upon his pillow unable to proceed.

Utterly forgetful of the presence of Count Arensberg, although the thought of him had been the source of her very dreams for months on months, Bianca rushed to her father's couch, moistened his poor mouth, wiped his forehead, kissed it.

“Father, dearest father! dost thou hear Bianca?”

A groan from the sufferer was all that followed.

"Father! my father! my dear, my noble father!" cried Bianca, and she wrung her hands in anguish.

"She marks me not!" said Arensberg to himself. And partly from high pride, and partly from the reverence of love, he gave her no recognition.

Asking for no permission, he threw open the casement, and placing his strong arm beneath the person of the illustrious prisoner, he raised him up upon his bed.

The fresh, cold evening air revived him.

"Bianca! Bianca, love! art thou near me?" asked the Marchese, faintly.

"I am here, dearest father!" was the answer of the sobbing maiden.

"Have me then removed to Umbria: this heat will kill me. Tell my friends how much I wish it, and they will soon arrange to take me."

His weeping, yet strong-minded daughter—that daughter whose feelings had been braced up to the utmost tension of scorn and indignation against the Church; first, for its vile cruelties towards her parent; and, secondly, for the unprincipled baseness of one of its high priesthood, the Cardinal, against herself—that daughter looked around in agony.

How could she answer? There, before her, was her father motionless, as far as his crushed limbs were concerned: motionless he was not in thought, or in spirit, the moment that consciousness returned to him.

Her eyes met those of Arensberg, and it requires no fancy to conjecture what must have been the meaning of the glances they interchanged. The Italian

lady looked and the German noble looked in return. Absence from each other had, as is often the case, given the most unfounded occasions of estrangement. But the present moment was all-urgent. Yet Bianca could do nothing save look imploringly.

"Take me to Umbria, my Bianca," again murmured the Marchese. "It grows so hot. Oh! for a breath of my native hills!"

"That you shall have my lord—my revered lord," gently whispered Arensberg, as he bent over the couch of the noble sufferer. "I but come to announce the liberty which his Holiness hath granted; and with your permission, I will bear you hence—and my followers are, at this moment, waiting to escort us. A few moments only and I shall have found litters for yourself and for your daughter."

"Impossible! Impossible!" sighed the Marchese, who had slightly rallied from the half-dreaming, half-delirious condition into which he had fallen.

"Not impossible, my lord," replied Arensberg, as he carefully and anxiously watched the returning rays of consciousness in the eyes of the sufferer. "Here is the order from the Holy Father, and in his own sacred hand. The Holy Virgin bless him!"

"Raise me, and let me read it, my kind young friend," asked the Marchese.

Both Arensberg and Bianca joined hands to form a back-support to the noble veteran, and thus fast linked they sustained him, while his eager eyes pondered over the document which broke off his chains, which restored

him to his broad lands, which recorded in no stint language his ancient services, which gave promise of the future confidence of the Pontiff.

And thus these two lovers remained, grasped hand-in-hand. What were their emotions? Who will say?

Both watched with earnestness the face of the Marchese as he read the paper. Both felt growing relief as they saw a kindly smile flickering over the pale, wan features. But both trembled as those pale, wan features became still more pale, more wan; and as the flickering, kindly smile gave place to a frown, not of pain, but of scorn and indignation.

"Bear back—bear back this foul document to its author, Lord Arensberg!" exclaimed the Marchese, suddenly rising on his bed, and disengaging himself from that support which Arensberg and Bianca had been giving him, and without which, a few moments before, so weak was he that he could not have sat upright.

"Bear back this insidious document, Lord Arensberg! Do you hear me?" again shouted the prisoner; and he strove to rise, but his lately tortured limbs failed him.

"Ah!"—and he ground his teeth—"you cursed priests!—cursed be all of you! You would send me away—you would, would you?—from this the scene of your cruelty and ingratitude. You are trembling, are you, lest it should become known how you have chicaned, how you have lied, how you have studied

to print those lies in the ink of blood? You would have me—me, whose blood is that of a La Scala—me, whose blood hath been shed in your defence—you would have me subscribe to this—to *this!*”

And he threw the paper—marked though it was by the seal pontifical—across the room.

Bianca, terrified at this outbreak, could do no more than place her hand upon his forehead—that lately cold, marble forehead, which was now glowing as from a sudden and fierce furnace-blast.

“Bianca!”

“Yes, dearest, dearest father!”

“Bianca! Bianca!”

“Speak—oh, speak to me! I am here, my father.”

“I am awake—I am conscious, child. Dost thou hear me?”

“I am here—do you not feel me, father?”

“Who was here just now? who brought *that?*”—and the Marchese, raising himself up still higher, pointed to the paper which he had flung from him—
“Who brought *that?*”

Then came the most trying moment in the whole of the life of Bianca. She tried once and again to answer, but she could not.

“The Lord of Arensberg, the guest you so often, of yore, welcomed,” were the words upon her lips; but she tried, yet could not utter them.

“Who brought *that?*” the Marchese again demanded, with increasing fierceness.

“I brought it you, my lord,” returned Arensberg,

firmly and distinctly. "I brought it to your lordship, with full, ardent hope that you would give it a kinder welcome."

"Are *you* a soldier, sir?" asked the Marchese, sternly.

"Your lordship must have long known that," replied Arensberg, yet not with one tone or one word defiant, but with unwonted gentleness; though the questioning of the Marchese had been insulting.

Bianca, we must say, was looking apprehensively for the answer. It relieved her.

"Whether then, my lord, let me ask you, should a soldier prefer life or honour?"

"Honour, my good lord."

"Yes, honour, sir knight. Honour above life—honour above the life of an only child, even—a name untainted above wealth and power, and (what is better) above the promise of a future field or fields of glory."

"Honour—honour above all things—my most true, my most noble friend," said Arensberg, soothingly. "And who ever, more than yourself, hath given the preference?"

"Then let this the judgment of thy lips—of thy heart, Count Arensberg, it cannot be—let this thine avowal, 'honour—honour, above all things,' bring thee back to knighthood. Thou darest—thou darest" (and the Marchese became almost suffocated with his choler) "... thou darest to tempt me by promises to myself—promises to my child—to sacrifice my honour."

“Your honour?” asked Arensberg, in alarm.

“Yes, my honour, sir knight. You would have me—so saith yon document—admit that I had been beguiled by the Duke of Urbino. You would have me admit that I allowed my vigilance for the safety of the Holy Father to go to sleep. You would have me, in order that the pious conclave (pious indeed!) of the Cardinals might be saved the odium of conspiring against the Pontiff—you would have me sign what would brand, for ever, the name of an illustrious friend. You would have me, like a puling coward, crouch as a penitent, though God wotteth I dare stand erect as a man. You would have me hand down to my child—mayhap to yourself with her—a name forsworn and . . . and . . .”

The vehemence of this effort burst the life-strings of the gallant Marchese della Scala. He fell back before he could complete his brave soul's protest, and but a short time elapsed ere both Bianca and Arensberg were bending over his corpse; both so agitated that neither of them could speak.

“Farewell, farewell to all—to all my hopes!” murmured Arensberg to himself. “Bianca, henceforth, must—yes, she must—think that I have tempted her father's honour; and though the thought may cross her that it was for her sake, that will make the breach between us the wider.”

Oh! how sorrowfully, with what an unmanned look did he leave the room! Speak he could not to Bianca. Overtures of aid and sympathy he dared not

make. Intuition told him that those overtures would have been returned with scorn.

Yet, though he left the chamber with his soul plunged into utter hopelessness, he had self-command enough to urge the entry of the attendants, and to stimulate their ardour by his pledges of reward.

What had been the anxieties of his young brother Rupert, of his esquire, of his followers, during his prolonged absence—they all having been waiting without St. Angelo; what they were, now that he returned to them looking worn and sad, absent in mind: all this we must leave to our readers to imagine.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE passionate remonstrance, with which the Marchese della Scala closed his life, will be understood upon our stating that the Pope, in concession to the entreaties of Count Arensberg—whom, as a favourite servant of Frederick of Saxony, the Pontiff was especially anxious to conciliate—had issued an order for the liberation of the Marchese. But, sad to say, true to his policy Leo had, without the Count's knowledge, appended a condition. That condition insisted that the prisoner should admit the collusion (if not more) of the Duke d'Urbino with the conspiracy against the Pontiff's life; and, moreover, should allow that he himself had been, though unknowingly, one of the tributaries to the crime.

All this was natural to the policy of the Papal Court, and peculiarly so to the habit of Pope Leo. Although, as we have said before, he chiefly regarded his throne as one of temporal dignity, there was within him, nevertheless, a fastidious wish to protect that throne against the grave slanders of the world. And he shunned, as a fearful evil, the idea going abroad, that

the priests of God's inner sanctuaries should ever have conspired against their highest and their holiest official.

This will explain much that would otherwise remain inexplicable, in regard to the behaviour of the Pontiff towards his ancient and faithful soldier, the Marchese della Scala.

About the year of our Lord 1311, Dante, at one of those crises in his most chequered and most tumultuous life, found solace and hospitality with Cane della Scala, then the imperial Vicar of Verona, one who had been ever a most deeply-pledged Ghibelline. From Can Grande there sprang another branch—that, namely, of which the ill-fortuned Marchese was the head. Nearly two centuries had elapsed since Cane della Scala had distinguished it by his bold and brave advocacy and support of the interest of the cause of Henry VII. of Germany. Since then various offshoots from this great family had abjured the political faith of their forefathers; and, aroused up to that passion for independence of which the Italian mind has ever, and most righteously, been susceptible, the Marchese had, among many others of his house, become the friend and soldier of the political Popedom, in opposition to the anti-Italian assumptions of the German Cæsars.

But, brave though he had been in the field, wise and transparently honest though he had been in the council-chamber, his numerous scars, his sagacious counsels, availed nothing with the Pontiff, in comparison with the value of making him and the Duke d'Urbino scapegoats, so that Europe might become

oblivious of the treachery of *the* Church against God's Vicar.

Thence it was that, though urged by his own humanities of heart (and Pope Leo had them, and indulged them, too, to an extent that shows how warmth of soul can triumph over the frigidity of a system), and though urged, nay implored, by Count Arensberg, by Raffaello, by the Chigi, he never would consent to a full exculpation of his noble prisoner.

Then, we must add, Pope Leo was distinguished even among the Popes for chicanery. And so it was, that while giving a free pardon to the Marchese, the Pontiff inserted those conditions at which he must have known, or ought to have known, any and every honest soldier would revolt.

During his passage from St. Angelo to his own lodgings, Count Arensberg uttered not a word. His brother Rupert, and his esquire, Baron Mellendorf, saw he was in trouble; and anxious though they were to know the cause of it, both preserved a respectful silence.

One, and only one incident drew the Count out from himself. It was this:—

On casting his usual soldier's glance over his little troop, his eye detected a form amongst them which he had not discerned on his approach to the castle.

It was that of a priest, and yet his habit was so torn, and his whole appearance was so disordered, that the Count was struck with pity, although so heavy and so absorbing were his own woes.

He, however, simply marked with his eye this strange figure, wondered in his heart how one so unmilitary could have got place among his followers, and then relapsed into that state of silent, haughty self-communion which is so natural a refuge to the troubled soul.

“Rupert,” said the Count, as soon as they had regained their hotel, “who was that half mendicant, half priest, whom I saw just now in the centre of your troop?”

“Come hither, Mellendorf, and answer,” exclaimed Rupert.

He was about to add some words of merriment at the appearance of the ecclesiastic; but his brother’s look was so full of pain and anxiety, that he stopped short.

“This wretched-looking man, my lord of Arensberg,” said Mellendorf solemnly, “is none other than our ancient friend Father Francis.”

“Father Francis! Dost thou mean that that wan and wasted figure—that unkempt, unshaven, ragged, tottering being—is he who hath so often taught us, and sported with us, in former days? Art thou sure?”

“It is he, my lord,” returned Mellendorf firmly.

“And whence came he? and why in such a miserable guise?” asked Arensberg.

“Forgive me! forgive me!” replied Mellendorf, half smiling, half serious. “I knew—how I knew I will tell you, should you demand confession—I knew

there was another prisoner in yon devil's castle, besides the Marchese della Scala, and, by means of a golden key I and Rupert rescued him out of the devil's clutches."

"A truce to such dangerous and unholy epithets, Mellendorf," answered Arensberg with a petulance and authority his esquire had never seen before.

"The devil's dungeon, and the devil's clutches," exclaimed Rupert. "Be not angry with Mellendorf, my brother. It is the devil's dungeon."

Rupert would have gone on in his delineation of what he thought about the nature and the purpose of this Christian fortress, but for his brother's interruption:—

"Let me see Father Francis, and this instant. Delay not, Mellendorf, until the good priest can have washed and refreshed himself. Bring him here, and do you both leave us to ourselves."

Count Arensberg was struck with anguish (and well he might be) when, after a few moments, there entered alone a man whose gait was bowed, whose step was tremulous, whose hair was blanched; yet whose form, whose undecayed muscle, whose eye, bespoke other ravages than those of age. His step was tottering and ill-regulated. And it was pitiful, most pitiful, to see one whose very brow had the stamp of high manhood, clothed in filthy fragments of filthy serge.

Count Arensberg, even while he rushed to support this frail, failing form, exclaimed—

"Father! Father Francis!"

"A chair, my son—give me a chair," was the feeble answer.

On a chair, and with affectionate reverence, he was soon seated by Count Arensberg. And then, with the same consideration, he was supplied by the Count's own hand with restoratives.

"You are very weak and ill, Father Francis," murmured Arensberg.

"I am weak—weak indeed, my son!" returned the Priest, "but this is no time for weakness and inaction to go together. Ask not one syllable about myself, Lord Arensberg, until we have done something most necessary for others. Have you, my son, seen the Marchese?"

"I have, Father."

"And is he released?"

"He is."

"And can I see him?"

"You will."

"When?"

"When you reach your own eternal home," said Arensberg, slowly and mournfully.

"Then they have murdered him at last, have they?" said the startled Father Francis, fixing a long, inquisitive gaze upon the Count.

"What can mean this silence?" said the Priest to himself, as Arensberg, instead of answering immediately, returned to his seat, and remained there pale and speechless.

"Have they murdered the good old lord, my son?"

No answer.

"Did he die upon his bed, Lord Arensberg?" asked Father Francis.

"He died upon his bed," returned the Count.

"Was his death a natural one?"

No answer.

"Were his limbs broken? Had his flesh and muscles been torn off by pincers? Are there nails upon the fingers of his corpse? Were the soles of his feet burned away?" demanded Father Francis slowly, and with a voice so deeply guttural, to which the grinding of his teeth gave a more grating edge, that Arensberg shuddered and looked amazed.

But still he answered not, and the wrung, dislocated, feverish Father Francis began to pity the anguish which was too truly painted upon the knight's countenance.

"Oh, answer me, my son!" cried the Priest eagerly yet soothingly. "Look at these poor fingers" (and he held them out, displaying the bloody and nailless tops) "Look at these poor legs" (and he drew aside his serge coverlid and revealed what were but little more than two shrunken, shrivelled bones)—"Did the Church make the good Lord Marchese such a skeleton, such an atomy as this, and did he die?"

"Ask not, ask no more, in the name of the Eternal!" implored Arensberg, and he hid his face with his hands.

"But answer thou must, answer thou shalt, Lord of Arensberg," exclaimed the Priest, and, forgetful of his

own physical weakness, he strove in his indignation to rise; but his powers failed him, and he sank down again upon his chair.

“What mean you, Priest, by words so insolent, and to a knight of the Roman Empire—‘thou must, thou shalt’?” the Count demanded fiercely.

“I mean this, young lord, that your knightly honour will make you answer; I mean this, now that I have endured the rack, the torch, the flaming oil, and that to save your heart’s love and her father, you must, you shall answer me. Why and how did the good, the brave Marchese die?”

“Father,” returned the Count—but even when he began, he had lost all his fierceness—“Father, the Marchese died upon his bed. The Lady Bianca was at his side. I went to him, bearing the pardon of his Holiness, and his last breath all but cursed me. Never again speak to me of his daughter.”

Then the strong man who had not even faltered in a word, stopped suddenly. No self-command or energy could avail him to proceed further.

“The Marchese cursed thee! Thou dost disown his child, thy love, thine own noble love! And wherefore?” asked the astonished Priest.

“I bore him pardon, Father—pardon on conditions that were dishonourable,” sighed the Count; “and his shade, as it left this earth, scowled at mine own dishonour.”

“Dishonour! dishonour to the Knight of Arensberg!” cried Father Francis.

“Yes, dishonour, and dishonour to the Knight of Arensberg, as thou callest him,” he answered with bitterness. “I had obtained the pardon of our noble friend, and at what effort God only wotteth. I read that pardon, and no soldier’s cheek would have blushed at it. And I bore it joyously and hopefully to the cell of the great veteran. But his Holiness—your Divinity, mine no longer—had added, and without my knowledge, conditions which a heart beneath a cassock may be able to respond to, but which a heart beneath a corslet must disown.”

Then uprose within the honest, straightforward German—within one who up to this time, and in spite of the influences of Martin Luther even, had clung with tenacious love and reverence to his Mother Church—then there arose within him one strong, stern, deep disallowance of a polity which he now, though late, found to consecrate perfidy to man with faith in itself.

“Father Francis, go ! for I will no more hold consort with any of your order. And you may bear to his Holiness, if you like, that Count Arensberg, who came to Rome to serve its ruler (all fealty kept to his own wise Sovereign), may be found, if his Holiness—pshaw !—hath a gentleman to accept the challenge, among the soldiers of Von Hutten and Von Sickenberg.”

Father Francis now showed the results of his stern self-discipline of many years. The words, the looks, the gestures of the German noble would have appeared

to him exaggerated and even intentionally insulting, had he not kept his own mind in the calmness of pure observation.

“ My son,” he answered, “ be thou right or wrong in these thy statements and resolves, Father Francis is thy fellow-sufferer. Let us think over, talk over, act upon our grievances anon. But now, and at this instant, and in the name of no church—but in that of God—save the Lady Bianca !”

As he uttered these last words he did actually rise and maintain his standing; and his voice was singularly imploring as well as imperative.

“ We are separate for ever — for ever — and for ever !” moaned the Count.

“ And you hand her over to the tender mercies of the Cardinal !”

This was too much to resist. It roused Arensberg into activity; but that activity differed vastly from what it would have been some hours before. In its vigour of purpose it was as great (if not greater) as ever. But most assuredly it was more wisely deliberate in its plans; and, from the fact of its utter unselfishness, it was the more removed from the contingencies of passion. For pure though may be the affection of the heart for a beloved object, so long as that heart aims after its possession, there will be—there cannot but be—such alternations of hope and despair that they distract the attention from the sought to the seeker.

Despair for self often asserts its innate power by its

transcending into a higher region than one of selfishness, there to put forth powers to which no mere personal hopes or aims could have given adequate impulse.

Despondency for self and indifference to others are not equivalent. Despair is not necessarily misanthropic. Hopelessness and gentleness, just as we often see poverty and benevolence, can go together.

The heart-broken woman—heart-broken because she has lost either the husband of her love, or the child of her hopes—will often be the most tender and sagacious in her sorrow for the sorrowful. And, as often, the half-starved cottier will be the most ready in offering his loving alms to the yet poorer mendicant.

“Father Francis,” said Arensberg, with assumed firmness, “to death itself you may hold me pledged, rather than that any harm shall befall the Lady Bianca, though, alas ! alas ! she no longer is aught to me.”

“Save her, my son ! and save her quickly ; for I know too well that, otherwise, she will soon be within the power of those who are designers against her happiness.”

He was proceeding. He was impassioned enough, both in his warnings and entreaties. But what was his earnestness compared with that which followed, in interruption ?

“Rupert ! Rupert !”

The chamber, nay the whole house, rang with the knight’s summons.

“Rupert! Rupert!”

And then there was such a stamp of impatience, from the steeled boot of Arensberg, as made every rafter tremble.

“Rupert!” shouted again the voice of Arensberg. The Priest, meanwhile, had fallen back from sheer weakness upon his chair, and was looking anxiously yet speculatively upon this outburst.

“My brother!” exclaimed Rupert, rushing from the lower apartments of the mansion—“my brother!”

The young Graf had fled up to his brother’s rooms, followed close and eagerly by Mellendorf and others of his suite.

The loud voice, and the more imperative stamp, of their lord and master had both aroused and alarmed them.

“Rupert! is your troop at hand?” he asked, with a calmness that was strange, in contrast to his previous vehemence, yet which was perfectly to be accounted for; for, now after the first moment of natural excitement, all his thoughts and purposes became calm and replete with caution.

If Count Arensberg had been borne away headlong by love with promise, he might have forgotten both his obligations to law and order, as the Envoy of his Prince; he might have dared, recklessly dared, to attempt to scale St. Angelo. Such unseemly and shortsighted an attempt would have been but too natural to his recent state of excitement. But, as we have said, self-despair, as far as it related to Bianca, cooled

down his first emotions: yet, so it was, the declining heat of such a furnace but left the links of his resolution the stronger in their intertwining.

“Your followers shall be ready in five minutes, brother,” answered Rupert. “And what command you?”

“That you place some of them, as scouts, hither and thither, about St. Angelo; that you place others just as widely, around the palace of the Cardinal; that you watch and instantly report to me, if you see aught of movement from the gates of either. I shall not stir hence, until I hear from you.”

“Be wary, Rupert,” the Count added after a pause. “And be sure that none of you do aught save observe and instantly inform me.”

CHAPTER IX.

LET us return to St. Angelo, and to that one of its chambers in which the Marchese della Scala had so recently expired.

There was sitting the Lady Bianca in apparent apathy—apathy at which even those servitors of death, who quickly busied themselves about the corpse, were scared as they looked upon it. They had been familiar with cries and shrieks, and frantic gesticulations, for all these they were wont to witness among the affectionate survivors of the dead. Indeed, they had also often seen, in contrast, the silence, the stunned silence of the mourners. But now something strange, something absolutely foreign to the grief of mere bereavement, met their eyes and appalled them.

There was sitting the Lady Bianca. She was silent, it is true. True also is it that her looks towards the corpse of her father were frequent, and as frequent were the big tears that followed. Still the dominant expression of her countenance was not that of grief. It was that of stern resolution.

And who, that hath ever seen it, hath ever forgotten

such an expression amid that of love and that of sorrow ?

We may, without any use of fancy, but in the exercise of a legitimate imagination, picture to ourselves the combined result of a storm-cloud and a gentle rain. How different is that effect upon the mind from that which is felt on the sight of a storm-cloud, or of a genial shower, when seen singly !

Bianca's face now frowned and threatened, then dissolved into tenderness and sorrow. But what is more, the forehead frowned and relaxed at the self-same moment ; so, also, her eyes flashed and wept.

And this strange conjunction of emotions will not surprise the observer.

She had lost her father ! Noble he was in the estimate of men, but who knew his true nobility as she had known it ? Who knew as she had known his high truthfulness ; his unspotted virtue ; his gentleness, fringed with light as it was by the glory of his fame ? To her, motherless as she had been from her infancy, he had been mother and father both. She looked upon his corpse, shuddered. Then there came, with a velocity which memory had never known before, his former words and looks of love, ay, even his reproaches. Then came her recollections of pride in his triumphs, above all, her bounding joy when he had so often and so gladly exchanged the applauses and pageantries of the world for the quiet society of his child. Then came again her horror and wrath, that this same noble

being should have been unjustly imprisoned, insulted, tortured.

Yet amid all this not one thought of her own deserted, perilous condition crossed her; while she frowned and wept.

She wept indeed, the tears were copious, still there was no outburst: all was silent and motionless within her full-fraught bosom.

What, however, made her frown? Was it her recollection of the recent insult of the Cardinal? Did her cheek burn with fire, as she recalled, not so much his proposals as his daring challenge of her noble father's fame?

No: she was rather dwelling, though her agony was great, upon the fatal presumptions against Count Arensberg, that he whom she had enshrined on the altar of her heart, should have ever sold his honour, even though he may have thought therewith to buy her love; that he should have descended to low and lying acts, even though his purpose were to rescue that dear, dear being that lay dead before her.

Thus she was feeling, and happy for her it was that there were such antagonistic forces working against each other, within her soul. They neutralized each other, and left her in that comparative self-command which, as we shall soon see, she so much needed.

"You shall not touch it! You shall not touch it!" Bianca exclaimed eagerly, when some servitors of the Church entered the chamber, and proceeded to arrange the corpse for its interment.

"The Church must be obeyed, fair lady," answered, and resolutely enough, the leader of the sable company. "The Marchese," continued he, "hath died unannealed, and we must observe the laws of the Holy Father."

"Then bear his blessed corpse whithersoever the Church will," exclaimed the half-frantic and imprudent lady. "Bear him, I say, whithersoever the Church will. It may be you escape not his confronting you on the day of the Resurrection."

"Silence—silence, for God's sake!" implored a voice beside her. It was a very gentle and a very soothing one. "Speak not!" it continued; "remonstrance is now useless: it may be fatal to yourself. Trust me, dear lady, I will arrange all."

"And you dare, Lord Cardinal," cried Bianca, "you dare thus again, and in the very presence of the dead, to insult me? Begone, Lord Cardinal! or, by the manes of my father, I will denounce you—yea, to-morrow—before his Holiness."

"You shall rue this, insolent beauty!" the Cardinal murmured.

"Bear away!" he exclaimed in a loud, commanding tone, "bear away this fair young heretic, who thus has scorned the authority of Holy Church, to the Convent della Penitenzza. See to it, brethren, that she escapes not."

This command he uttered to an attendant band of followers who had accompanied him; and despite her struggles, and deafening her shrieks by a thick cowl

which they threw over her head, they tore her bodily away from her father's corpse and from the Castle of St. Angelo.

Down the hill on which stood the castle they descended, little dreaming that they had been observed and were being tracked by some of the trusty scouts of Count Arensberg. As they diverged off to the right, through a dark, narrow avenue of houses which led to the Convent della Penitenzza, and while their vigilance and caution were relaxed, they now feeling so near at home—the poor captive suddenly threw off the suffocating cowl, and with one long, loud shriek for help startled even the sleepers in the surrounding houses from their trance.

But that shriek had been heard, and by one whose young chivalrous heart forgot all orders, all caution, at such an appeal from woman.

For Rupert had no sooner despatched a messenger to his brother to inform him of what he had seen passing* than, but guardedly, he followed the ravishers.

This he did not for the purpose of rescuing her whom he shrewdly suspected to be the object of all this violence; for he had received the orders of his brother, his commanding officer, to do nothing but observe.

Yet the instant that female cry reached him, all commands—a soldier's commands though they were—were utterly forgotten.

He had only three men with him, and the opposite

party numbered some ten or twelve. One moment before that woman's shriek he had looked disdainfully upon them, clothed as they were in their large dark serge of monkery ; and he had felt even disinclined to touch them, such foul scorn had he learned to entertain for the effeminacy of the whole brotherhood.

But how his bright, blue Saxon eye glowed when that shriek reached him !

“ To the rescue ! To the rescue ! ” whispered the Graf to his attendants ; and as he whispered thus his falchion leaped from its scabbard.

He uttered this challenge to his companions in a whisper merely. But for the soldierly injunctions of his brother it would have been a shout, not a whisper.

Rupert rushed forward. His attendants, however, though they burned to follow their young master, were arrested by the low voice of Essel.

“ Our orders are simply to observe and to report,” he said to them, as they, with drawn swords, were becoming furious in their anxiety to reach their leader.

“ Help ! Help ! ” again screamed a maiden.

“ Leave him—leave our dear young lord to achieve the rescue by himself. But move up, move up ; though there is but little need : his good steel will soon become acquainted with those shaven crowns.”

But while he was thus whispering, his eye faithfully followed his young charge, and his mind was ready, and his calculations accurate, for giving aid the moment it might be wanted.

“Der Teufel!” cried one of the men, “those priest-women have swords, I see.” And, reckless of the words of Essel, he rushed forward to his young lord’s side.

Essel had seen this, as soon as had the man beside him. And as soon was he close behind Rupert, who, instead of meeting with an unarmed body of monks, found himself in the midst of well-accoutred mercenaries of the Cardinal.

But before Essel and the two other soldiers had been able to reach the spot, Rupert had been engaged in a serious and no bloodless fight, hand to hand, with two of the mercenaries. He had disabled one of them; the second, however, was pressing him sorely. Meanwhile the Cardinal, quickly recovering from his surprise, hurried onward the rest of his attendants with their burden.

“Help! Help!” again pierced the ear and heart of Rupert, although his attention was so fearfully engaged with his surviving combatant.

But no sooner did the latter perceive others to be approaching than he took to his heels and fled.

“Follow! follow! Conrad,” exclaimed Rupert to the soldier that came up. And in spite of his loss of blood the gallant youth led the pursuit.

And considering the disproportion of the numbers, the renewed meeting would, most surely, have been fatal to the Germans, but for the following:—

The Cardinal had bravely placed himself in the rear of his party, the nearest to his pursuers. Whatever were his crimes and follies, he was no craven; indeed,

even if he had been, there was now such an all-commanding purpose (that of securing his possession of Bianca) within his bosom, that cowardice would have no voice. But guilty feelings confused his brain, and fool-hardily, though he was without a weapon, he thus exposed himself.

He turned round, so soon as he heard the approaching fleet footsteps. Never dreaming that he was unarmed, and wholly unsuspecting as to who he was, Rupert, with a rapidity that defied all resistance, cut him down.

Then ensued a tumult among the mercenaries—a tumult, not so much under the impulse of rage and revenge for their reverend master (for though they loved his gold, they saw through him and abhorred him), as of selfish, earnest eagerness to escape from a broil which they felt would be very perilous if his presence should be discovered.

They one and all laid down their captive and rushed to the fallen body of the Cardinal. Quick as light Rupert and his followers darted towards the lady and there stood on the defensive, while the mercenaries, well taught the necessity of silence, bore off the body of their master.

All this seemed strange to Rupert; for, when expecting some sudden onslaught, he saw them defile before him, bearing among them what seemed to be a corpse.

Rupert looked at it. The cowl had fallen off. The face was cadaverous, it is true, but the whole head was unstained with blood.

"Then I have not killed him," murmured Rupert in a tone which it would have been difficult to interpret into joy or disappointment.

"Thank God, my lord, you have not killed him!" returned Essel. "I know that face: he is the Cardinal himself. Had you killed him, short work would this blessed Government here make of all of us. Oh! my Lord Rupert, why have you neglected the orders of the Count?"

The Graf would have forgotten, in his anger at this rebuke, his love, his respect for the old Seneschal, had not both been arrested by another scene.

It was that of the Cardinal making a desperate effort and raising himself as they bore him past Bianca, who, disengaged from her captors, was standing erect.

Woman though she was, she was a soldier's daughter, and her heart, which had been quailing whilst she was a captive and was being borne she knew not whither, resumed its energy, now that she had regained the free air of heaven and found herself in the midst of flashing swords and with her deliverers.

She fearlessly returned the glance of the ghastly-looking Cardinal, as his mercenaries bore him off.

"Signora, there is a Nemesis!" hissed through the teeth of the wounded man.

"And there is a God, Lord Cardinal!" returned Bianca as sternly as her native gentleness would allow.

Rupert, meanwhile, though so excited both by his

maiden efforts in conflict and by this scene, was beginning to feel faint; and the vigilant eye of Essel had prompted him to place his arm beneath a shoulder of his young lord.

With a tremendous effort he shook off the proffered aid, yet thanked Essel.

“Command us, fair lady,” prayed the young candidate for knighthood. “Whither may we have the high honour to escort you?”

“Whither? whither, do you ask me, good, brave, kind young lord? Whither? To the grave,” returned the orphan, now at length yielding to a terrible reaction from the excitement of the day. “I know not whither you may bear me, save to the grave. There—there only, the wicked cease from troubling.”

Her energy would, however, have soon returned to her, and this little burst of feminine weakness would have been soon redeemed by some act or word of self-asserting dignity, if there had not been a sudden interruption.

Whilst he was holding secret colloquy with Father Francis, news had reached Count Arensberg of all that was going forward. His first impulse was to rise and issue forth to the rescue. Shame, or rather that bitter, bitter sense of being suspected if not denounced by his heart's love, paralyzed him.

“Father!” he exclaimed, in miserable anguish, “go I cannot. She would—I know her well—prefer death itself to receiving life and liberty from me. Safe she will be I am sure: else I know not my brother Rupert,

my friend Mellendorf, or my men. Yet I fear me, let her but learn who are her deliverers, and I know her well, and well and long thou knowest her, Reverend Father, she will die rather than owe escape to me or mine !”

Two of his trusty soldiers—the two who had, almost breathless, brought to him the news—were standing near Father Francis.

“Can you carry me, good men?” asked the priest.
“Can you carry me to this scene of broil?”

This will explain the interruption.

Just before his brave, stalwart bearers approached the spot of conflict, Father Francis descended from their arms and advanced, feebly, limpingly, it is true.

He gained the side of Bianca, and he did so without meeting resistance, for Essel instantly recognized him, and his bearers were warranty enough for his friendliness of purpose.

“Bianca ! Daughter !”

It would seem as if Bianca was never to escape from the actions and re-actions of emotion.

Many and many a day, and week, and month, had passed away, since Father Francis, her spiritual friend, her confessor, the tutor of her childhood, had been summarily torn from her side.

Most assiduously had the Cardinal kept from her all and every information of his whereabouts and of his condition. In fact, she had long ago affectionately and reverently mourned for him as for one amongst the dead ; for she herself knew, as all Christendom knew,

that to attain a priest was generally equivalent to destroying him.

“Daughter!” again repeated the good Priest, for there had been no answer to his first words, so astounded and so agitated was she at his appearance and his voice.

And now there came sounds so marked that their distance was short indeed—sounds of men marching so firmly, so regularly, that even an unpractised ear might have detected they came from troops.

“Quick! quick, Lord Rupert! to the palace of the Chigi!” whispered Father Francis, earnestly; and he added a watch-word. “Save her, and leave me!”

CHAPTER X.

COUNT ARENSBERG was, meanwhile, alone within his chamber. Rupert, his brother, Mellendorf, his esquire, both of them had gone forth upon a mission in which, dearest though it still was to his heart, he felt that he could take no part: she whom he loved, and for whose safety life would have been but a poor surrender, would, he knew, peril that safety rather than owe it to his hands—hands which she now believed had been active in signatures to the dishonour of her beloved father.

And Father Francis was gone too—he to whom his heavily-laden soul had disburdened itself; and thus the only remaining link of conscious sympathy with his mournful secret seemed to be broken off.

And then there came upon him anxious self-questionings, whether his own individual interests, in the cause of Bianca and her father, had not made him somewhat forego his loyal duties as the envoy of his Prince. What if this his interposition on their behalf should embroil him with that Court to which he had been despatched for great and purely political purposes?

What would be the judgment of the wise Frederick, his sovereign master, when he heard of it ?

All this, however, Arensberg would have treated lightly, had he but retained Bianca's confidence. That would have manned him with energy enough to endure disgrace, should disgrace follow.

There he sat in his solitary room, gloomy, heart-stricken, and foreboding terrible apprehensions.

His ear, always quick in listening—for that organ had been long and acutely exercised in his past soldier's life—was now preternaturally sensitive.

He heard a knock at the gateway of his house. His heart beat while he marked distinct sounds upon the stairs that approached his room. His own door at length vibrated with the summons of a visitor ; and he grew pale, for the summons was gentle, though earnest.

He invited the applicant ; but he did so with a voice somewhat dubious.

The visitor was neither Rupert, nor Mellendorf, nor Father Francis, nor Bianca herself, who, by the strange paradox so often to be seen in the surmises of anxiety, he, for a moment, thought it possible might fly to him.

“Eccellenze, may I enter ? Am I unseasonable in my call ? Tell me truly. But do not deny me, unless duty wars with courtesy,” said the visitor ; and, so saying, he withdrew the folds of the cloak with which he had veiled his face, and disclosed to Arensberg the features of a friend.

"But, ah!" he exclaimed, as soon as he caught sight of the haggard features of the Count, "you are in sorrow I see. Forgive me this intrusion, Eccellenze: I will call to-morrow."

"Stay, pray stay, good Raffaello," answered Arensberg, entreatingly. "I was but this moment thinking that ere I bid farewell to Rome, my duty, my reverence, my gratitude would insist, however painful, upon my seeking an interview with yourself."

"Bid farewell to Rome?" enquired Raffaello in astonishment. "Why, your embassy has but just begun! And—and—what, Arensberg?" he asked with a meaning and anxious look.

"All is over! yes, all, dear Raffaello," groaned the Count.

Arensberg then recounted to Raffaello some of the sad particulars of the Marchese's death-scene. He ended with saying,—*"Raffaello, all is over!"*

"Yes, all is over," echoed a voice faintly, but exultingly, as the young Graf hurriedly entered the room, sank down upon a seat that lay near him, and then feebly added, "Give me some wine, brother: I am faint."

He had reached the Count's rooms by a desperate effort, bleeding as he was. Half-sinking, yet resolved not to sink, he leaned back upon his chair. A deep purple streak ran diagonally across his forehead—some points of it thickly clothed with gore—others still open and pulsing with his blood. Arensberg, his brother, with a soldier's promptitude, drew forth and arranged

linament. Raffaello seized upon a wine-flask, and gently placing his arms beneath the fast-paling youth, first moistened his lips, and then urged him to swallow.

“ Brother Arensberg, be not angry with me ! I have broken your orders. List to me, while I can speak. We tracked a party from St. Angelo. We were long obedient to your commands to use no violence. But there was a woman’s shriek for help, and I forgot my duty and”

“ And rescued her, I’ll be sworn,” exclaimed Raffaello, triumphantly.

“ We saw her safe within the Chigi palace,” returned Rupert.

“ Rupert !”

“ My brother !”

“ I bless thee for it, yet I must condemn thee,” said Arensberg, with half-assumed, half-sincere sternness. “ Were you not commanded to do nothing but observe ?”

The young Graf, pale though he had been from loss of blood, blushed crimson at a rebuke which he knew he deserved, according to the laws of military obedience, too well.

“ Go on with your report, or rather recount it more minutely, Rupert, if you can,” eagerly asked Arensberg.

“ I can add nothing more, save that the Cardinal himself has fallen.”

“ Fallen ?” ejaculated both Arensberg and Raffaello—and they both looked aghast—“ Fallen ?”

"My Lord of Arensberg, I must leave you," said Raffaello. "I must leave you, and that instantly. Think not," he added with a smile, "that I do so in order to desert a friend in trouble. Trust me I will not be idle on your behalf."

"Go, dear, noble friend: I trust you with—yea, I trust you with mine honour even."

"Will your brave young brother be able to sit his horse to-morrow, think you?" asked Raffaello, in a low voice.

"Sit him to-morrow? Yes, sit him directly," returned Rupert. "I can ride this instant—unless it be in flight," he continued proudly.

"Then, my dear young lord, you must lose no time. Flight? Did you say flight? To counsel that would be useless. I know you too thoroughly, I admire you too warmly and too sincerely to counsel flight. But now that the Cardinal has fallen"

"He is not dead," interrupted Rupert; "would he were!"

"Now that the Cardinal has fallen," continued Raffaello, as if there had been no interruption, "the lady for whom you have fought so well, so nobly, is in the greatest danger every second she remains in Rome."

"Believe me, my good Lord Arensberg, not even Agostino Chigi could protect her, even if he would. For God's sake bear her, and that quickly, beyond the frontiers."

It would be difficult to imagine a more painful

predicament than that in which Count Arensberg found himself. He felt no resentment against Bianca for her rash judgment upon his conduct. Even if he had, his chivalrous honour would have nerved him to risk each and everything, save honour, in her behalf. But stir one step from Rome he could not—dared not. Was he not on duty as the envoy of his Prince? True, his mission had fulfilled its purpose; and on the very morrow, after his audience with the Government, he had to leave. Nevertheless, for him, an Envoy Extraordinary, to violate the laws of office, and to leave the Court in haste, and with attendant doubts and surmises, if not positive accusations, this would be treason to his princely master.

Then also there recurred again and again the conviction that, even were all other objections powerless, the Lady Bianca would receive no boon, however great, from him.

How then could he answer to Raffaello? How?

“Move hence I cannot, my noble friend, and that thou knowest. I leave utterly and wholly my brother to your guidance.”

“Then all I bargain for,” said Raffaello, “is that, as soon as possible, you provide your brother with credentials that he is moving forward with a portion of your suite as Envoy, and that you give him an escort as strong as you can spare. Those credentials will serve him for a pass through the Porta S. Lorenzo. And,” he continued, turning to Rupert,

“do you, my dear young lord, wait near the Basilica of San Lorenzo. You shall be detained no longer than I can help. And God speed you homeward with your charge!”

CHAPTER XI.

“YESTERDAY I burned the Satanic works of the Pope. It would have been better had it been the Pope himself we had burned ; I mean the Pontifical See. If you do not break off with Rome, woe to your souls ! Let every Christian well reflect that in holding communion with the Papists he renounces his eternal salvation. Abomination to the modern Babylon ! While I have a breath in my body I will cry abomination ! ”*

Who utters this daring philippic against the Church of Rome ?—against a church of fifteen centuries, which claimed an apostle for its founder, holy martyrs for its witnesses, wise and learned confessors for its advocates, miracles innumerable for its authentication, and an incalculable list of suffrages from among nations and potentates for its permanent institution ?

Who thus presumes to defy and to burn the edicts, and to brand with reprobation the rule of him whom the largest, and fairest, and most mighty portion of Christendom had for so many ages proclaimed to be God’s Vicegerent ?

* Note 11.

Who, in fact, has the hardihood thus to confront and challenge what voices so manifold and so potent avowed to be the thunder and the lightning of Almighty God?

And where does he throw down this gauntlet?

Martin Luther is the challenger, and his own pulpit at Wittemberg is the spot whence he hurls his anathemas.

Do you see the mad orator? Do you listen as he speaks with a countenance worn and wasted with thought and vigils, yet lighted up with the flush of indignation, as if inspired? Do your eyes take a survey of the vast crowded church, the audience as it becomes breathless beneath successive peals of eloquence, and at last pale and shuddering when he closes with the above terrific malediction?

Perhaps, in the history of the world, no other fact can be adduced, in which there was such moral courage as that which Martin Luther then displayed.

The day before he uttered the oration from which we have selected a closing paragraph, he had gone forth to the east gate of the town of Wittemberg, bearing in his arms the rescripts, the decretals of Clement VI., the Extravagants, the *Somma Angelica*, the *Chrysopasus* of Eckius, and, above all, the Bull of Leo X. uttered against himself, and there, in derision, had burned them all.

And now, when the appalling anathemas of the sermon were concluded, the congregation left the church with less composure, less solemn silence, less personal communion with God, than it had been wont to show after one of Dr. Martin's sermons.

The general crowd—even they seemed awe-struck. Artisans, common labourers — women, who lived by their fingers at the distaff—youths, whose budding consciousness made them the more sensitive, and, therefore, the more shrinking at any moral alarm—all these retired from the church, slowly, reluctantly, as we have said, looking at each other in mute anxiety; and, on gaining the open area before it, remaining, not so much in groups as in an affrighted multitude, and listening, watching with their eyes, for the issuing forth of others to whom, for their rank and their intelligence, they had been accustomed to appeal for counsel and for sympathy.

This, their mute astonishment, can scarcely be said to have been broken by murmurs and occasional ejaculations, and oaths even, that, at several distant moments, burst from amongst them.

“Monk versus Pope,” sighed one; “and who will, who can be the winner?”

“Hell and furies!” shouted a second. “Shall we be bearded by this shaven crown? What ho! Rudiger, come here!” he cried, beckoning to a fellow-workman, “come here, Rudiger!”

He who was thus addressed passed towards his friend, and, though the throng was dense and resolute, he got to that friend’s side. It was by brute force.

“Rudiger!” whispered the above-mentioned speaker, “get our brother craftsmen around the vestry window. Father Martin shall roast; and, look thee, the embers are still glowing. Capital feast, brother Rudiger!

Would God the Holy Virgin might be present at our feast!"

Most incautiously he had left off whispering, and had ended his last words in a tone so audible and so articulate that others around him could both hear and understand him.

"Eat and drink to thy full, accursed Papist!" shouted aloud a swarth armourer, and with one stroke of his gauntlet he levelled him to the ground, his very features smashed by the steel glove, and the whole face inundated with blood.

"Eat and drink, accursed Papist!" he shouted again, as he placed his foot upon the breast of the fallen braggart.

But he had to draw his sword. Though he had gone to the house of God to worship—though he had gone to the house of peace—he had been sagacious enough to arm himself. And when, on having struck down the braggart, he found swords and poignards leaping from their sheath, the bold armourer congratulated himself that he had donned his weapons.

"Keep guard! keep guard!" shouted a hundred voices—"Keep guard, brave Rosenkrantz!" as the unarmed crowd, the moment there was a sign of fight, forgetful too of their recent moral anxiety, saw one of the fast, strong-hearted advocates of their reverend doctor beset so sorely and unfairly.

"The devil take thee!" exclaimed Rosenkrantz, as he dealt a blow on the head of Rudiger, which brought him to his knees.

But the blow could not be repeated. There was no

time to do so; for there had left the church, following the populace, a large body of the students of the University, most of whom, indifferently concerned though they were in subjects of mere theological disputation, were aroused to liberty, to freedom of thought, to anticipative moral and intellectual progress, through the bold, liberal, hopeful character of the lectures of Martin Luther and Melancthon.

This movement of the young mind of the University of Wittemberg was no more strange than it was sublime, taking place though it did under the lectures of professors who had no ancient collegiate authority. There was no "genius loci," around Wittemberg. It was a new establishment. Erasmus, the great Erasmus, commanded deference, not only because his high, unrivalled powers of classical criticism astonished as well as stimulated his hearers, when at Oxford he dissected, analyzed, the ancient authorities and exemplars in poetry, in rhetoric, in ethics, but because, also, he spoke from a chair over which, and around which, the awe of ages was overspread.

Martin Luther and his brother professors, however, were new men in all senses of the word. There had been the gravest irregularities in the nominations of some of them to their chairs of office.

We have seen, in a former chapter, how sudden and vast an increase of students took place at Wittemberg, in consequence of the disputations between Eckius and Luther at Leipsic. Many had migrated thither from the more ancient universities, attracted by the nascent

Reformation. It was certain, therefore, that they would be boldly responsive to the Philippic of their favourite doctor, and furiously indignant at the treatment he was receiving from the Papacy.

They rushed forth, as we have said, from the church; drew the small swords which, at that period, students were allowed to wear; flew to the booksellers' shops where copies of the Papal Bull were exposed for sale; tore it to atoms; ran with it to the water; and shouting with mingled rage and laughter, "It is a bull; let us see if it can swim," hurled it into the stream.

The foes of Luther saw at a glance what utter madness it would be to challenge, by any counter-attempt of violence, the storm that now raged around them. They retired, bearing away their fallen leader; and they did so unobserved, so utterly had the enthusiasm of the students drawn away both the attention and the persons of the crowd.

Meanwhile, Martin Luther descended from the pulpit, and no sooner did he reach the floor than numbers of men—some the burgomasters of the town, others his brother professors—surrounded him, and went with him to the sacristy. It would seem as if they had been impelled to do so by an instinctive certainty that the daring speaker would need protection.

"What means that tumult, brethren?" he asked earnestly, after taking a seat, in order to recruit himself. "What means that tumult?" he again demanded, as the shouts of the excited multitude broke again and again upon his ear.

"It is but a natural outburst of the students, Reverend Father," returned Councillor Stolzenberg, who had just entered the sacristy, after having been a witness of the first movements of the tumult. "They are only trying if the bull can swim no more safely in the river, than it can stand the flames."

"Ha ! ha !" returned Luther, "now, at last, the Holy-Father's paper is a true bubble, indeed." *

To almost every one of those who now stood around him, this pleasantry seemed ill-timed: even Philip Melancthon felt it was, although his profound, his habitual reverence for his friend, usually either blinded him as to his faults, or indisposed him to remark upon them when his more refined instincts detected them.

And yet, ill-timed though seemed this pleasantry in immediate sequence to a scene so awful and so portentous, he who watches the action of the laws of our emotions, will be slow to call it unnatural. But for such re-actionary movement from the intense to the sportive, the former would often be suicidal. Its rigidity would break itself. Its rebound is a spontaneous leap for the sake of self-preservation. Instead, therefore, of regarding the wit, the raillery, the hearty laugh of Martin Luther, or of others, when they followed in him, or follow in other earnest men, acts of the most solemn gravity, as indicative of a mind superficial or oscillating, we would rather accept them as proofs of the stern energy of passion which preceded, and which, in proportion to its very

* Note 12.

sternness, demands for its life's sake the relaxation.

We have said the men who now surrounded Martin Luther in the sacristy, did not reason so. True they as well as he had been recently strung up to the tightest, as to their thoughts and feelings. But the difference was, he had wrought them up, and his exhaustion and need for an unbending were the greater.

"Ye look woe-begone, my masters," exclaimed Luther cheerily, as his eye glanced around the little company and saw no smile, not one, the faintest even, in answer to his jest. "Dost thou fear, Philip, lest the bull should swim?"

"Nay, nay, Doctor Melancthon, we cannot fear for that," interrupted Stolzenberg, who, more than the others, had a sympathy with Luther's humour. "We cannot fear for that," he continued, "for the lads took care the animal should float piece-meal."

"Prithee be not so gaysome, Stolzenberg," returned Melancthon gently. "Dare we dance upon a crater, while the throes of a womb of fire are rending our frail standing-place into crevices?"

"Dance?—dance, did you say, dear Philip?" asked Luther. "Not dance, surely. That were a symptom of recklessness, indeed. But 'the Lord maketh a merry heart'—merry, ay, though in times of threatening. Think me not presumptuous, brethren," he continued, exchanging his recent smile for a look of grave, solemn reverence, as he added,

‘ Our mountain standeth strong, it can never be moved,’ not even by the Pope’s, or the devil’s throes of fire.”

All rejoinders, whether of fear, or warning, or sanguine sympathy, were stopped short by the entrance of a new comer into the sacristy.

It was our old friend Schwärtz.

No sooner had he appeared at the court of the wise Frederick, in the suite of Count Arensberg, than the latter most warmly commended him to the favour of his sovereign. In consequence he was received, and ordered to wait in readiness for employment.

He had not long to wait before an occasion offered on which both to show his readiness of despatch and to gratify his personal anxiety to revisit Wittenberg.

The little company in the sacristy who were, as we have said, many of them ready to address Doctor Martin, turned round, as the door opened, and the sight of a royal messenger gave fresh impulse to their anxiety.

Some, but not all of them, knew Schwärtz ; yet, as their anxiety was afresh aroused, none of them dwelt with sufficient thoughtfulness upon his countenance, so as to recognize him.

Luther alone was calm and took his survey, as the mud-stained, travel-worn young man approached him, bearing in his hand a letter, the very envelope of which, with its broad royal seals, told all that it was from the Government.

“Welcome back to Wittemberg, good Schwärtz,” said Luther, rising, and, with a calmness and apparent unconcern that gave serenity to the group around him, he took Schwärtz by one hand, laid the other upon the head of the kneeling youth, and gave him his benediction.

“How have ye sped, all of ye, my son?” he asked, still repressing all signs of impatience to see the document of which Schwärtz was the bearer, and of which he made no concealment. “You have not forgotten the lessons of Wittemberg?”

“God be thanked! I trust never to forget them, dear Doctor,” exclaimed Schwärtz fervently. “But, pardon me, I have orders to haste, to haste. Pray break this seal, and give me answer.”

Philip Melancthon, Gaspard Cruciger, the Rector of the University, other men of the Reformation thenceafter to be distinguished in the coming strife, were present; and they, each and all, watched in eager silence the face of Luther, as he broke the seal, unfolded and read the letter.

“I will go, God helping me—I will go—I will go—though I be sick and ill, even if I am carried thither,” cried Luther, as his eye that had become somewhat tame in its expression, after his great effort, now again re-burned and re-glanced with its wonted ardour.

“Read it to all—read it aloud, Philip,” and he gave the royal missive to Melancthon.

Melancthon read as follows:—

“DEAR REVEREND FATHER MARTIN,—His Grace commands me to ask of you, whether you would be willing to appear before the approaching Diet, should our Lord the Emperor insist upon it.

“If thou hast not heard, let me tell thee, that his Majesty has convoked a Diet to be held at Worms, and that right speedily.

“May his Serene Highness answer for thy presence?

“May God have thee in his holy keeping, and direct thee!—Thine,

“SPALATINUS.”

Melancthon ended.

“Go not—go not, dear honoured Doctor. Surely ‘the net is spread in vain in the sight of any bird,’” broke out the entreating voice of Cruciger.

And every one murmured an assent.

“Go I will,” exclaimed Luther vehemently: “Christ liveth, and I will enter Worms in spite of all the gates of hell and all the powers of the air. Though they kindle a fire all the way between Wittemberg and Worms, that shall reach unto the heavens, I will, in the name of the Lord, appear, inasmuch as I am summoned, and come between the great teeth of the Behemoth and confess Christ, and let Him rule. So, dearest brethren, say nought against it. Hinder me not, I pray ye, in the name of the Lord.”

“Come to my cell immediately after vespers, good Schwärtz, and thou shalt have the answer.”

And Luther rose, gathered his robe about him, smiled affectionately and encouragingly upon his appalled friends, and with a step of even greater resoluteness than ever, left the sacristy.

CHAPTER XII.

"CARE heedfully for this letter, my good Schwärtz," said Luther, as he handed it to the Elector's messenger.

This occurred in the cell of Doctor Martin, and at the hour, immediately after Vespers, which the Reformer had, as we have said above, appointed.

Schwärtz, having reverently received it, still stood waiting for some inquiries or some additional instructions. Luther, however, uttered nothing more—nay, looked restless, as if he wished his young friend to retire.

"What has come over him?" thought Schwärtz. "This morning, and even amid such excitement, he could ask me upon other matters, and in truth they were trivial enough in comparison with those that then concerned himself. But now, not one word, not one questioning!"

"Do you hesitate to carry back my answer, good Schwärtz?" demanded Luther, looking wonderingly upon the young messenger, who paused to obey.

"Hesitate, reverend Father!" exclaimed the latter.

"Never. You told us no later than this morning, what would be the purport of this letter, and I have thanked Almighty God, ever since I knew your resolution."

"Then why not carry it, and in all haste?" asked Luther.

"Have you no questionings to put to me?"

"None, good Schwärtz; none whatever."

"And will you, Father, go alone to Worms? Shall none of us share your dangers, if dangers there shall be? Your many friends will ask if you sent no message of remembrance. Shall I say nay?"

It is easy to understand the laconic treatment with which Martin Luther had thus received his old favourite pupil; and why, instead of diverging off from the grave thoughts that oppressed him, instead of relieving his burdened spirit by sundry queries about the interests and well-being of others that were most dear to him, he was showing such reserve.

Throughout his great and perilous career, Luther never forgot, often exaggerated, his own individualism in that mighty movement of which he might, with only some few qualifications, be said to be the author and the sustainer. We well know that frequently upon the occasion of a sudden and threatening crisis, he was wont to revert back upon the support and fidelity of Melancthon. Nevertheless, the law of self-concentration ruled him, ruled him tyrannically, and was sadly often the source of sorrow and of errors.

He had left the sacristy impressed with the convic-

tion that he, and he alone, would have to stand the brunt of the contest to which he was summoned at Worms. His friends, all of them, had shown faint-heartedness. And who can wonder that the fire within his bosom became self-involving ; that it fed upon itself instead of seeking fuel from the sympathy and the counsel of other men ?

It, therefore, was not strange that one whose heart, at moments when it had but the commonest fair-play, threw out its embracing tendrils of affection and concern for others, was at this stern moment intensely, yea, exclusively subjective in its action.

Martin Luther answered nothing to the affectionate words of Schwartz save—

“Care heedfully for your mission, my son. Think me not ungracious or unloving : I would be alone. Should my friends ask for me and about this our interview, then tell the whole, good Schwartz. They will understand.”

And when Doctor Martin Luther found himself alone, as soon as Schwartz had left him, he barred his cell door and sat down to *think* !

First in its evil agency, there was his own physical depression from the effort and passion of the morning ; there was then in addition the gloom of solitude : and he felt that gloom ever since he had fled from the continuous darkness of his monastery into the light of social life. And then, and then, thick in crowds, and all of them sombre and foreboding, there flocked fancies manifold. He a lone man, a poor monk (and his me-

lancholy was not to be cheated away by thoughts of the renown and homage which he had achieved already), he now, undistracted from himself or from a view of his own position, was called to ponder upon the present, and to aim at becoming a seer to himself for the future.

Dreadful were his ruminations—dreadful, if we may use that term in description of the anguish which they caused him.

“And,” murmured he, “am I exorcised from Holy Mother Church, as if I was a devil? Doth the so-called Vicar of God banish me from the realm of Christ? Is my poor head to feel—and alone!—the forked lightnings of the wrath of the Eternal!”

Martin Luther clasped his hands upon his forehead, bowed that forehead upon his desk, and groaned aloud.

“I must appear before the Diet, must I?” so continued his soliloquy. “And I must proclaim before the princes of the earth my supreme fealty to the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. And for the Lord Jesu’s sake I must accept and wear for ever an anathema maranatha, must I?”

“Yes, verily, and thou shalt wear it as an ever-eating, ever-voracious chaplet around thy brow. It shall first scorch thy flesh; it shall consume thine ever-renewed and ever-renewing brain; and a livid garland shall it be to thee, as thou movest among apostates, to whom is reserved blackness and darkness for evermore!” a voice seemed to answer.

Luther raised his forehead from his desk, as it challenged him.

“Satanas ! Satanus !—avaunt thee ! In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command thee to begone.”

Luther looked, and looked, certain of seeing something objective to himself. His vision, disturbed and anxious, created a dark shadow upon the whitewashed wall of his little cell.

“Devil ! Satanus !” he exclaimed, “I will go to Worms, and in spite of thee and of thy brood. Is this thy far-famed shrewdness wherewith to keep me from cursing the Church that is thine offspring ? Thou art at last beguiled into sorry weakness by the soft heart of thy paternity. Thy offspring—thine own offspring—I will curse ! Babylon, thine own child !”

This must seem exaggerated to any save those who have carefully studied Martin Luther’s life. We pretend not for a moment that the above, a real history, was the result of aught more than the disturbed imaginings of a vivid and energetic mind, overwrought for the time being.

Perhaps, also, it should be recollected, that the age in which Luther lived, was prone to realize in imaginative form the spirits of evil.

In such objective apparitions we can have no belief, neither have we even poetic credence in their fanciful developments.

But that the great Reformer, who was now on the threshold of an act that would inflict irremediable evil upon a system in which there was too much evil—that he should then have been made more than ordinarily the object of assault, who will deny ?

CHAPTER XIII.

WHILE all these discussions and commotions were taking place in Saxony, Count Arensberg was journeying direct to the house of his fathers.

Passing over those incidents which must naturally have occurred to himself and his party, including the Lady Bianca and Theresa, her companion, we proceed to state that some days before he drew near to his castle, he sent forward his brother Rupert.

His object was, by this means, to inform his mother of much that his own written communications to her had left untold; of, in fact, the circumstances that related to Bianca's history and those persecutions which had made it absolutely necessary for her to fly to Germany, and to accept his escort thither.

The Countess-mother heard all Rupert had to say, herself making but few remarks. She was a strong-minded woman, nevertheless she shared to the full in the common prejudices of her country against Italian and German intermarriages, especially in a case such as that which her sagacity now foreboded, where the bride would be not only an Italian, but one brought

up in the court of Rome—a court such as that must be (she felt sure) over which the recent Pontiffs had presided.

There was also another feeling in her mind. When Rupert detailed to her what he had heard at Rome of the refinement and the luxury of the Della Scala palace, and further, as he spoke (from his own knowledge) of the circle in which the Lady Bianca must have been moving, she feared lest her approaching guest should be struck at the absence of many of those elegances as to which Germany, even in the abodes of her greatest nobles, was far behind Italy.

In the sixteenth century, the chief splendour of the German nobles consisted in the number of their retainers, armed or unarmed. They had, indeed, their family plate to display upon great occasions ; neither were their wives or daughters without splendid jewellery, heir-looms in their several houses ; but their castles were but barely furnished. From century to century their interior had but very seldom been reappointed, so that old-fashioned tapestry, whose hangings were faded, and chairs and tables antique and worn, and floors strewn with fresh rushes instead of carpets, were often united with a gorgeous display of gold and silver upon the side-boards.

The Countess-mother was quite alive to the fact that these incongruities were especially manifest in Castle Arensberg, and her Germanic pride liked not the idea, that an unfavourable impression might be made upon the mind of the noble and fair Italian lady.

She, therefore, determined to throw around the first meeting as much state as was compatible with the means at her disposal, and the uncertainty about the exact time of her eldest son's arrival.

It was a few days after the arrival of Rupert, when Count Arensberg and his little cavalcade drew within sight of his castle, which stood proudly out on an eminence that commanded a wide view of the waving woods around, and also of the distant town of Wittemberg. The approach to it was circuitous, and thus gave time to the beating heart of the Lady Bianca to compose itself.

Haven of rest though the ancestral house of her German lover appeared to her, yet the proud blood of the Della Scala mounted high to her forehead, as she thought of the desolate and unattended manner in which she was about to be presented to the Countess-mother.

Arensberg, as soon as he had crossed the drawbridge, which had been joyfully lowered at his summons, found that everything was prepared for a magnificent reception. His anxious eye saw this in an instant, and thence he drew right auguries as to the feeling and intention of his parent. Dismounting, and with great care assisting Bianca to dismount also, he gracefully bade her welcome to the domain of his forefathers, and asked permission to lead her to his mother.

With a proud and gratified mien, he passed through the lines of the ordinary warders of the castle, in whose rear were marshalled with scrupulous care numerous bodies of retainers.

His mother, accompanied by Rupert, met him and his fair charge on the threshold of the great hall, and quickly, upon their greetings having been exchanged, he could not forbear to notice, and thencefrom to draw cheering inferences, that the sombre old room was furnished anew with a fresh and sumptuous dais, and that the seats, which his mother and her sons were wont to occupy, were brightened up with flowered silk brocade.

These, his observations of things around him, were far from trivial in their influence on his mind and hopes. Lord and master he knew himself to be. His own will in regard to any marriage he might choose to contract he knew would be law; but he was desirous to have his widowed mother's full sanction (and this thoughtful arrangement for receiving his bride promised it); and then also—yea, much more so—he was sensitively fearful lest his refined Bianca might meet with anything to offend her taste, that had been so long and so skilfully educated.

We have said that his mother, accompanied by Rupert, met them upon the threshold of the great hall. For the first time since her lord's death, she had donned a robe of rich black velvet, interwoven all over, as was the fashion, with golden acorns. The petticoat underneath was richly embroidered, and even fringed with bullion-gold, and the dress in front was made short enough to show this embroidery. The sleeves were somewhat loose, lined with white satin, and at the edges embroidered also. As may be seen

in the costumes of the period, the very seams were sewn closely with gold thread (so that they formed gold patterns), and, altogether, the outer robe was so over-loaded with gold embroidery, as to give it a most gorgeous appearance. The person of the Countess-mother was made still more elaborately imposing by the head-dress, then so fashionable in Germany, one which we can call only a head-piece of gold wire or net, in which the hair was confined, at every interstice of which hung drops of the same precious metal.

“My mother,” said the Count, “let me present to you the Lady Bianca della Scala, who deigns to honour our poor castle by making it her refuge from treachery and wrong. You will, I know, welcome her.” Then, addressing the latter, he continued, “Lady Bianca della Scala, in my mother you see the best and tenderest of parents.”

She gracefully knelt down upon one knee.

But the Countess, despite her prejudices—and they were many—against an Italian daughter-in-law, felt her true woman’s heart melted within her as she thought of all the sorrows which the fair young creature before her had undergone, and of the vile conspiracy against her happiness and honour, which had compelled her flight from Rome. Bianca had knelt down on one knee, we have said, before the Countess. In paying this species of homage she found relief to her heart, overburdened as it was with the debt of gratitude she owed to the delicate kindness and chivalrous devotion of

Arensberg, who, gently taking one of her hands, placed it in that of his mother.

“Pray feel assured, dear lady,” said the Countess, raising and embracing Bianca, “you are most welcome to our house and to our heart. But you must be fatigued, and need quiet and repose.”

Saying this, she affectionately led Bianca, followed by Theresa, to the suite of apartments that had been prepared for her.

“Where is Nina, Rupert?” asked Arensberg, as soon as the ladies left the hall. “Why did she not come to welcome our Italian friends? She is well, I trust?”

“I know not what has come to Nina,” answered Rupert. “She seems strangely altered. I have thought so ever since the day she so bravely rescued you from the boar’s tusks. She is pale and wasted, and her cheerfulness seems gone. But perhaps all this is owing,” he added, laughing, “to the deep theological questions on which she is engaged. Too deep for a woman, eh?”

“What can all this mean?” asked Arensberg. “Pray seek her out, Rupert. As a brother, I have ever loved her, and as a brother I will ever befriend her, in joy or sorrow. But stay: I will seek for her myself in her own private sitting-room—in Nina’s room, as we used to call it. And yet,” continued he, “I must almost instantly repair to Torga, for I would not that our Elector should, for one moment, doubt my promptitude in his service.”

The Count hastily left the hall, from which his mother and the Lady Bianca had so recently retired, and through a long corridor advanced to a small apartment which, since Nina, the orphan, had been received into the castle, and had gradually extended her gentle but commanding influence over all the family, had been especially reserved for her use.

He knocked at the door, but there was no answer. He knocked again, still all within was silent. He then perceived that the door was slightly open, and, on entering, he beheld Nina upon her knees, at the farthest extremity of the apartment. Her hands were clasped, and she appeared to be in the act of prayer; but the fixed and stony expression of her pallid and agonized features betokened but little of the calmness of resignation. Her back was turned towards the door, and as Arensberg entered, quite unheeded by her, these words were slowly gasped forth, "I cannot bear it. Oh, God! spare me this dreadful trial! Make a way for me to leave this, my home!"

Count Arensberg was in the act of retreating, feeling deeply distressed that he had intruded, though most unintentionally, upon a moment so sacred, when Nina, uttering a piercing cry, fell back fainting.

The cause of the trance that followed was pure and simple. Nina was utterly unaware of the approach of Arensberg. Her heart was surcharged. For months on months, during the Count's illness, she had been an observer every hour, of his devotion to Bianca. She had self-denyingly lent herself

to carry on the correspondence of Arensberg with Bianca, meanwhile, having within her the terrible thought that he who so long had been the cherished idol of her soul, had given his best affections to another. She had suffered much since Rupert's arrival, when she heard from him of all the perilous intricacies through which Count Arensberg had so anxiously and so safely conducted the Lady Bianca; and of all the sweet and soothing, and reconciliatory interludes that had taken place during their recent journey. And as there came the moment when it was her duty to be in attendance on the Countess-mother, who was going to receive her son and her son's guests, she tried by a great effort to overcome her feelings. Nature, however, would not be controlled. She fled to her own chamber, and so guileless was she, sent no excuse for her absence.

The retreating steps of Arensberg were arrested by seeing her faint. On his rushing back, eager as a brother to give her all the assistance in his power, an idea, confused though it was, crossed his mind as to the possible cause of Nina's agony and fainting.

"And have I been," he said to himself, "the unconscious cause of this thy suffering, dearest Nina? Is it possible? What other meaning would thy words, uttered though they were to God, convey?"

He lost not a moment in bearing her to a chair, applied water to her temples, chafed her hands in his own, calling tenderly upon her, but all in vain. She showed no sign of returning consciousness.

Count Arensberg felt embarrassed. He would not

have felt so, had he not been disturbed by his recent surmise. And although he strove to shake off that surmise, just as any and every man of any manly and chivalrous principle about him would have done, yet there remained an indefinite suspicion, and, thencefrom, an indeterminateness as to how he should act.

Happily at this moment of his embarrassment, his young brother, finding the door open, entered.

"Shall I summon assistance, Arensberg?" asked Rupert, when he discerned Nina in her fainting fit.

"No!" returned the Count, urgently. "Call no aid, I beg of you. Can you guess the cause of the gentle orphan's sorrow, Rupert?"

"She loves you, brother," answered Rupert gravely. "She loves you, I feel sure, with more than a sister's love. Poor Nina!" he continued, "I have long and with deep concern suspected it; but so modest and so retiring hath been her manner, that I have clung to the hope that I was mistaken."

"Then, Rupert," returned Count Arensberg, "dear to thee as is thy hope of knighthood be thy respect for her secret. Keep it, especially if possible, from our mother. Upon no grounds whatever can I dare linger here a moment longer: I must make all speed to the court of the Elector. This is some relief, since it will be better for Nina not to see me when her consciousness returns. But remain with her, Rupert, till she is herself again; and whatever excuse she makes for her absence from the hall and for this sudden illness, do thou appear to believe it."

Saying this he left the apartment with a noiseless step. Rupert, though he felt the awkwardness of his own position, in being thus left in the sole guardianship of Nina, could not but acquiesce in the imperative necessity of his brother's departure; and taking a seat near the unconscious maiden, his attention was taken up with anxious wishes for her quick restoration, and with fears lest he should be discovered while upon his watch.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was reasonable that Count Arensberg should feel eager to obtain an audience as speedily as possible with his sovereign, the Elector Frederick. For, although he had not left Rome one moment before his mission was concluded, the circumstance that he might have committed himself, if not his official character, by aiding a subject of the Pope to evade his territories, was suggestive of very grave foreboding.

It was, therefore, with an oppressed heart that he repaired to Torga, where the Elector then held his court. Very soon after his arrival he was admitted to the prince.

Our readers will have been enabled, from the history of the times, to form an estimate of the character of this wise Elector; as also, to determine the position he was occupying amid the political and religious movements of the day. Heretofore we have not thought it necessary to state the special object on which he had sent an Envoy-extraordinary to the Papal

Court; it will now, however, be right to observe, that the Sovereign Pontiff had, by every available artifice, endeavoured to conciliate the Elector's confidence and obedience, with the immediate purpose of obtaining his surrender of Martin Luther's person to his own ecclesiastical jurisdiction. And the Elector's reason for expressly commissioning Count Arensberg to Rome, was, through the latter's diplomatic talents, to evade this requisition, and, at the same time, to give no umbrage.

The prince had authorized him to urge—and in his name—that, while his reverence and faith in the Holy See remained intact and was most profound, he would hope that the Pontiff would allow the accused Luther to answer for himself, and before a tribunal of his own country.

It will suffice to say, that the express design of Arensberg's mission was to gain time. For the Elector—still anxious both to preserve the appearance of an unsuspicious neutrality, and, above all, to protect the great Reformer—felt certain that only a few months could elapse before the entire question would be submitted to the young Emperor, and that in a place in which he could directly exert his power for the guardianship of Luther, should the trial go against him.

How Count Arensberg, on his arrival at Rome, found all his proposed plans useless, from the resolution of the Court to fulminate against Luther; and how, therefore, he found his sole business to consist in the

discharge of the mere formalities of his embassy, will be obvious to our readers.

Frederick the Wise was famed for a policy which, while it baffled all those who attempted to over-reach him, never committed his own honour—never so much as laid it open to suspicion. And the range in which he displayed this policy was that of foreign courts only, not that of his own almost domestic electorate. In the latter he was the open, guileless man, free both in the expressions of his face and in the words of his lips. There his benignity, his thoughtfulness, even his economy, all bore so immediately upon the welfare of his subjects, that, coupling with these features of his character, his enlarged love of literature, his munificence when necessary for its sake, and his broad-minded tolerance of opinion, all those subjects confided in him as well as loved him. He was like a parent, who, after having had through the whole day exerted every power of shrewdness and sagacity, in order to meet others in business who were striving to circumvent him, returns home at eventide, relaxes his brow of thought, throws down the reins he had held over his tongue, and smiles, and laughs, and frowns, without predetermination.

Count Arensberg knew all this, and under other circumstances it would have soothed much of his perplexity and foreboding. But he had to meet his prince upon matters that concerned the relations of the State to another and a mighty power; and the former part

of the Elector's character was that which, he felt sure, he would be called upon to satisfy.

"Welcome back home, my lord," said Frederick, in a tone of kindness, raising his eyes from a rough draft of paper, from which he was dictating to his secretary, Spalatin. "You have been well, and sped well, I trust, my lord. Eh?"

And the Elector's eyes fixed themselves upon those of Arensberg, as if to say, "We must interpret the answer by other things than words."

"Alas! may it please your Serene Highness, I fear me that I have gone on a bootless errand. Deign, gracious Sovereign, to impute my failure to no lack of energy or thoughtfulness. I had been anticipated, long before I could have possibly arrived at Rome."

"Your papers, my Lord Arensberg, will, I hope and believe, save you from all self-reproach. None of us can command success. Only, before you give them, tell me how long you were on your journey after you left our Court; and also, when you started on your return from Rome."

"Your Highness, I was in the saddle on the very evening of my commission, and reached the holy city on the twenty-seventh morning afterwards, as the first of these my papers will authenticate."

"Then, in truth, good Arensberg, thou must have had hard riding," returned the prince, in a more gracious tone; and his adoption of the "thou" for the "you" was, in itself, a sign how his reserve was beginning to relax.

"Hard riding it must have been," the Elector added after a moment, "must it not, Spalatin?"

"Our couriers, may it please your Highness," replied the secretary, "have rarely done the journey in that time."

"And how found you matters at the court of Rome?" asked the prince.

"The Court, gracious Sovereign, had, in full conclave, decided, and irrevocably, upon those points on which your Highness had commanded me to seek delay. Before I could gain an audience with even any of the Pontiff's ministers, the bull of excommunication (of which I despatched to Spalatin the earliest notice) had been proclaimed."

"Then, the mishap, Arensberg, was mine, not thine," returned the ingenuous Elector.

"Had your Highness commanded me, or a far more skilful messenger, a month before, I doubt me much if the event could have been postponed even."

"Ha! and wherefore?"

"From what I gathered, may it please your Highness, the Holy Pontiff, long before I reached his capital, had found, for once in his life, that, high and heavenly, and irreversible, as are his decrees, he, in this one matter at least, was no longer autocrat."

"Proceed, Arensberg," said the Elector, as his commissioner hesitated, lest he should be presumptuous in the presence—"Proceed."

"The Holy Father, so far as I could learn, looked upon the religious controversies of this our fatherland,

as a passing outburst of a cloud in the heavens above us, and he wished to provide no tractors to its lightning."

"And he was wise," the Elector murmured. "Proceed again, my lord."

"But there were men around him, who called upon him to discharge artillery to break and disperse that cloud, and with no measured voices they let him know that if he spared its fire, it might possibly be directed against himself."

"Now, go to!" exclaimed the prince, half-laughing, yet he was too serious upon the subject to laugh outright, "thou hast become a poet, Arensberg. Speak direct, honest Saxon."

"Doctor Eckius, your Highness, had sounded, oft and oft, his reveillé, before I arrived. I found that the gracious Pontiff, loving ease and joy, and the peaceful delights of taste and learning—and, therefore, sorely loth to leave his bed of roses, and to breast a hedge of cactus thorns—had been rudely, most rudely, summoned by the clarion of the priest of Ingoldstadt."

"Go on, Arensberg," cried the Elector. "And so, the Holy Father did leave his couch of roses, and has chosen thorns instead thereof! But now, do be plain-spoken! I know and understand your parable, and me it pleaseth mightily—much, too, because, good knight, though our purpose may have failed, thou hast trained thine imagination."

This was no unnatural exhibition of that new impulse to imagination, which the influences of love, and

of the intercourse with the refined and the refining associations of Italy, must ever give to an ardent and impressible spirit. Count Arensberg, until his more phlegmatic prince had hinted at it, was utterly unconscious of his having spoken in words that were otherwise than calmly prosaic.

"I crave pardon, my gracious master," asked Count Arensberg with unaffected modesty; but he felt mortified, for he was now, too late, discovering how his recent fellowship with the land of imagination, had seduced him off from the actual in expression. "I crave pardon . . ."

"You need no pardon, Arensberg," replied the prince. "I love nature; and, romantic though we are here at home in our half-formed poetry, and though we love it, and also the wild witchery of the Hartz, we can delight too in the tamer, yet more symmetrical figures of the south. Proceed, my lord."

The Count, with that pain and annoyance which any and every ingenuous mind must feel at being played upon, whilst in its warmth, by the icy waters of cold criticism, revolted back to the coolest and most direct statements.

"The Holy Pontiff, may it please your Highness, much against his will and much against his judgment, disturbed, nay, for a moment, frightened by monks and priests, and cardinals, who beset him with alarms as to the power and progress of Doctor Martin, and with no gentle insinuations as to the theological supineness of his Holiness, had—if an unworthy son of the Church

dare say so—had been forced to proclaim a bull of excommunication against the great professor of our Wittemberg.”

“Had you an audience with the Pope?” inquired the Elector, eagerly.

“I had, your Highness. But I left him as wise about my mission as when I went. All I bore away from him was this letter, which I pray leave to hand you.”

“Was it a private audience?” demanded Frederick, and he showed, but very slightly, a feeling of mortification.

“The Holy Father was not alone; neither by any effort could I obtain an interview with himself alone. I had audience with him twice before I went to him to take my leave. On the first occasion he was, when I approached him, in earnest conclave with men, of whom your Highness has often spoken in terms of highest eulogy, and whose names and works promise to be immortal.”

“Of whom speak you?” asked the Elector.

“Michel Angelo and Sanzio Raffaello, your Highness, were present at my first audience with the Holy Pontiff. I felt an instinctive indignation that the representative of my gracious Sovereign should, on grave affairs of State, be mingled up with considerations of art and genius, however glorified at present, or however to be glorious hereafter. And I drew thence an inference, that my audience with the Pontiff was to be purely formal. And so it was!”

“Do you know these men, Arensberg, and did you learn aught from them, that concerned your mission?”

“Of Michel Angelo I saw no more, your Highness. He soon went far from Rome, on his employ at the marble quarries of Sierra. Of Raffaello I saw much. And yet, though I was with him every day, and sometimes more than once, I could learn nothing. Art and theology have made a mutual compromise.”

“They have, have they? Then each will suffer. Albert Durer—you know him, Arensberg, do you not?—Albert Durer but lately brought to us some of his recent paintings. He is truth itself—truth in form, truth in expression: and for what else do we need the canvass? . . . Yet stay, Lord Arensberg; you are beguiling even ourselves from far weightier topics. Pray, proceed again.”

“The Court of Rome, your Highness, is resolved upon the extermination of the German heresy, so they call it. And, though I have been so short a time at home, I have learned that their efforts have been as prompt as they are earnest.”

“You have had time to know even this, my lord?” asked the Elector, raising himself again to the attitude of a suspicious questioner—an attitude which he had been induced to abandon by the open behaviour of his envoy.

“I spent but the brief space of an hour in my own castle, before I waited for the summons of your Highness,” answered Arensberg.

He gave this answer modestly and firmly. And yet

the shrewd eye of the Elector could detect in him an effort at self-command. It displeased him.

The Elector Frederick was not a man to be blinded, and the industrious innuendoes of the jealous friends of Count Arensberg had striven to forestall even the wings of time, and to awaken within him surmises, incipient though they were, about his envoy's visit to his own estates, before he approached the present abode of his royal master.

"But why have gone out of your route, Lord Arensberg? Why not have hurried hither just as quickly and just as straightly as you did to Rome?"

"I beg your Highness not to condemn me before I have been heard."

"Condemn you, Lord Arensberg?" asked the Prince. "Have we uttered one syllable of disapproval even?"

"Nay, verily, my most gracious Sovereign. Yet, my heart misgives me when it compares with the present the past welcomings with which your Highness hath so often greeted me. The route I chose, thinking it the shortest, though by far the least luxurious, was across the Tyrol, and my castle between Innspruck and the Court was on the road."

And then Arensberg, albeit with many a circuitous expression, as if feeling his way, candidly stated to the Elector his whole history with Bianca and her father.

But, as he proceeded, it was no difficult matter for him to discern upon the countenance of his Sovereign, not so much of anger as of grave perplexity. Nevertheless, undauntedly he completed his confession.

What a relief was it to his foreboding heart, when the Elector, after some moments of anxious silence, answered,—

“You could, perhaps, have done nought otherwise, good Arensberg, and I do not condemn you. God wotteth, though our days of chivalry on behoof of damsels are getting into the sere and yellow leaf, and though we have made somewhat of an exchange of the saddle for the cabinet, yet we ourselves might have done the same. But—yes, but, my lord, and look not so concerned,” continued he, and a gracious smile stole over the furrows of his thoughtful forehead, as he saw the Count beginning to exchange his look of glowing gratitude for one of anxiousness—“yes, but—see you not our perplexities that must follow? Lo, you there, ‘your own envoy, has,’ so Rome will say, ‘been guilty of the abduction of one of its own fairest and richest wards.’ And do we need to give more provocatives to the Holy See than we have already given, ay, and are giving still? Answer that, Master Spalatin,” as he turned towards his secretary.

“The Holy See has enough already upon its hands, may it please your Highness,” answered Spalatin, “or I am much mistaken. And it will waive this pretext for a quarrel, at least for the present.”

“And is that your profound knowledge of the sacred conclave?” demanded the Elector of his secretary. “Does history, does our own experience tell us that its policy is embodied in one chieftain?—that it is not hydra-headed, and that each of its heads hath its sepa-

rate object, such object ever in good fellowship with the objects of the other heads? Mark us, we shall soon have a missive from some Cardinal in claim and demand of this fair damsel."

"Count Arensberg," said the Prince, after he had mused awhile, "I must fain impose a penance on you. I must command you, for some weeks at least, to act as if there were—there had been—no Lady Bianca in existence. Your service to the State requires that not one line of writing, not one message, be the channel confidential howsoever, shall pass between you. Should Rome pursue this lady, spend not one moment in defending her. Who commands your castle?"

"My young brother Rupert, your Highness," answered the Count, in great chagrin.

"Then leave all to him. Let him bear all the brunt. And now, my lord, sit you down and let us ponder over these papers you have brought us."

It was nigh to a moral martyrdom, that to which State-necessity and the imperative commands of the Elector Frederick now consigned Count Arensberg. With a lover's ingenuity and prescience in the art of self-torment, only a few seconds had elapsed before he had surmised all the suspicions, all the proud anger, all the resolutions to vindicate her own dignity and no longer to remain a dependant, as it were, upon the Countess-mother—feelings which he predicted that Bianca must have and carry out, so soon as she found him silent, and therefore, apparently at least, estranged. 'Then,' concluded he, with a sigh which his manly heart kept down

so that it was audible only to himself—‘Then, as her faith in mine honour has been already and so rudely shaken, in the name of high Heaven what will she not think of me, landing her in a strange household, amid tears and sorrow for the past, and without sending her one word of sympathy and reverence?’

His alarms, his forebodings, were many; yet nerved up to calmness, and as is natural on occasions of stern duty, to more than ordinary self-forgetful concentration of purpose, he sat down to aid his Sovereign in the study of the papers which he had brought from the See of Rome.

Spalatin read them out aloud to the Elector. They were more than courteous, they were fawning (for the Court of Rome has fawned, whensoever it might suit its purpose). They began with the most fulsome laudation of the prudence, the orthodoxy, the piety of the Elector. They assumed as certain, that the Elector held the person, the doctrines, the actions of Martin Luther—whom they branded with every opprobrious epithet as a servant of the devil, not of Christ—in the utmost abhorrence.

Then followed an announcement of the Bull of Excommunication.

“And should this minister of Satan persist in his insane proceedings, we expect your nobility to use your utmost power and authority to have him seized and to retain him captive according to our pleasure. . . .”*

* Roscoe, vol. vi., p. 229.

“Enough—enough, good Spalatin : read no more,” said the Elector, as he sternly interrupted his secretary.

A long silence followed—both Arensberg and Spalatin sitting mute and in anxiety for what might issue from the Elector’s meditations, when one of the Prince’s confidential ushers gave at the door of the closet the signal which his master had prescribed to him, whenever he had messages of moment to communicate.

The signal aroused the Elector from his abstraction, and he gave the command to enter.

“Herr Schwartz, may it please your Highness, has returned from Wittemberg, and awaits your Highness’s commands,” said the usher.

“Then admit him instantly.”

It was in general the habit of this wise Prince to hold direct personal intercourse with his trusty messengers, whether they were of noble or of low degree. And often, by this arrangement, from his sagacity as he studied their looks and elicited their answers to his questions, he, without disclosing the purport of the missions on which they had been sent, obtained lights wherewith to read the despatches they brought with them.

In the present case, however, Spalatin had been ordered to let Schwartz share his confidence, the better to enable him to make his observations and to report upon them.

Our readers have known already that Schwartz had been the bearer of a letter from the secretary to

Martin Luther, to ascertain if, should the Emperor require it, he would present himself before the approaching Diet. Also they are aware already of the answer.

“Have you finished, Spalatin?” asked the Prince, who had ordered Schwärtz to hand the secretary the despatches, and who, while the latter was reading the firm reply of the great Reformer, had engaged his messenger with a variety of questions touching Luther’s personal welfare, his proceedings, and the aspect of affairs at the University.

A graver shade than usual had come over his features, while he was learning from Schwärtz, that Doctor Martin had actually burned the Pope’s decretals in retort to the Papal conflagration of his own writings; for he saw that thenceforth compromise or conciliation was impossible, and fresh doubts arose within him as to the utility or even safety of Luther’s surrendering himself to the proposed tribunal.

“Have you finished, Spalatin?”

“I have, may it please your Highness.”

“And he declines?” asked the Prince, eagerly.

“He appeals to Cæsar, gracious Master.”

“Appeals to Cæsar!” murmured Frederick, in disappointment. “Then to Cæsar he must go.”

CHAPTER XV.

WE left Rupert at watch over the unconscious form of Nina, whilst his brother Arensberg was hastening to the Elector's court at Torga. The young Graf felt that his situation was more than awkward, for each passing moment increased his alarm lest his mother should enter on a search for Nina, and, on finding her in a condition so extraordinary, should insist on his giving explanations.

It was an immense relief to him when, after a moment's gentle knocking at the half-opened door of the chamber, who should enter but his own foster-mother! Of her quiet, thoughtful management he was sure; and, therefore, without anything more than uttering one word of caution—and that in a whisper—he left the room, and repaired to the great hall with a look as unconcerned as possible.

“All this is very strange, Rupert!” said his mother, as the former approached her. “Arensberg hath left his castle suddenly; but that I can understand, for his duty calls him to the presence of the Elector. But wherefore hast thou been absent, and

for so long a time? Didst thou go to travel aught on the way with thy brother? Here I have been left alone; although common, yes, the commonest courtesy to our young guest exacted your presence at least. And then as to Nina, how dare she have been absent on the arrival of her lord and master; and still more so, on the approach of a fair lady to whom, if not for her high rank yet from the conditions under which she seeks a refuge in our house, all honour should be paid?"

"Be not so chafed with me, or with Nina either," answered Rupert, throwing off, as well as he could, all appearances of concern and anxiety. "As to myself, I was watching Arensberg's departure for the Court; when I learned that dear Nina was unwell and within her chamber, and I went thither to see about her."

The Countess instantly saw through the whole. Long, long ago, her woman's sagacity had revealed to her the possible, but, to her proud mind, the scarcely credible feelings of the lowly Nina towards her son Arensberg, the head of a house so noble. The present circumstances confirmed her in her conviction. Nevertheless, so sure was she of the high principles and delicacy of the young orphan whom she had taken to her home and to her confidence, that, instead of breaking out in words of indignant and contumelious scorn, she contented herself with adding,—

"Leave Nina to herself, Rupert. She will be

better on the morrow. Arensberg's somewhat sudden coming hath upset her, and I love her all the more for it. It is but natural. Arensberg has been a brother to her ever since she crossed our threshold."

We may be sure that Rupert most gladly accepted this his mother's interpretation of Nina's illness.

Days on days went by, after this little episode. Not only did Nina recover from her trance, but, exerting a stern self-control over her feelings, sought the Countess, who received her apologies for her absence with little remark, save an expression of regret to hear that she had been ill, and of fear lest she had over-fatigued herself in the preparations for receiving the Count and the Lady Bianca.

Nina naturally was much thrown with the Lady Bianca, who spoke the German language well. The devotion with which she applied herself to soothe the sorrows of her noble rival, was a beautiful trait in the character of the orphan. She allowed no feelings of jealousy or bitterness to prevent her from solacing and endeavouring to amuse the Lady Bianca, whose soul was ill at ease.

In consequence of the Elector's interdict, of which we have spoken, Arensberg had sent her no communication. At first she felt alarmed. Soon after her proud heart began to be reproachful, then indignant. Considering her position she could not feel otherwise at what must have appeared to her such unchivalrous conduct.

Occasionally, though rarely, expressions of indignant surprise escaped her, when Nina, instead of seeking to make a breach between the lovers, eloquently defended the Count from any want of chivalrous devotion, and insisted, in the most persuasive manner, that when he could leave his Sovereign, whose servant he was, he would be able and be sure to explain all that seemed inexplicable in his conduct to the Lady Bianca's complete satisfaction.

In former chapters we have mentioned the grave historical events that were taking place during these days of private, self-consuming sorrow in the Castle. Sad contrast that, when hearts which were so attuned to sympathy with each other could be so incidentally divorced; when Bianca, on the one hand, and Nina on the other, could be so far devoured by personal thoughts and anxieties as to become comparatively listless to the great events that were taking place in their very neighbourhood!

The Lady Bianca—stung by personal wrongs into abhorrence of that Papacy whose treacherous policy had murdered her parent, and one of whose anointed heads had driven her into exile as the alternative of loss of virtue—would, at a period of more equanimity, have interested herself with the increasing strife between the Pope and Martin Luther. Nina, too, long ago committed as she had been to the purest sympathy with the new faith, would have forgotten everything of self in the approaching struggle.

But alas! though at table and often in more private

interviews, the Countess-mother and Rupert would aim to draw off attention from themselves by relating the rumours of the day ; though both would tell them how the Court of Rome had added to its severity towards Luther by a second Bull of unconditional excommunication ; how the proposed victim was meanwhile, with heroic fortitude, calmly pursuing his studies and labours in his pulpit, and in his professor's chair ; how the young Emperor Charles had convoked a Diet, and proposed to summon Luther to the bar of the assembly ; how all classes of society, men of letters, jurisconsults, nobles, the lower clergy, the regular orders, the burghers, the peasantry, were all in ferment ; how the Elector himself, with Count Arensberg about his person, was in constant councils : we say, though both the Countess-mother, and her younger son, frequently adduced these rumours for the purpose of arousing their attention, it was long before they could excite more than a passing interest in their bosoms.

How different were the states of mind in both the Countess-mother and in Rupert ! From constant communications from the Count himself ; from occasional letters of Melancthon ; yea, even from a transient visit of Martin Luther (whom no perils distracted), they learned—even to particulars—that the Papal Nuncios were resolved to bring matters to a crisis, and that Luther should be burned if they could but succeed ; that, as to the German States, the Princes were arrayed against each other in the struggle ; that the youthful

Emperor professed to hold, blindfolded, the scales of justice between the litigants, yet that the most mighty influences were being thrown by Roman emissaries to destroy the equipoise.

“May I leave you, dearest mother? Good Essel cannot need me in order to protect the castle?” asked Rupert, so soon as he had cast his eyes over several packets of papers that arrived one morning.

“Leave us, Rupert? What meanest thou?”

“Look you, my mother;” and he handed the papers to her.

One of them was from his brother, commanding all his retainers, whom Rupert could muster, to repair to Worms, to be his guard of honour at the approaching Diet.

Other papers followed. They were not addressed to Rupert: they were letters to Arensberg, who after having read them had enclosed them. They had been written by Von Hirschfeldt and John Schott and others, all praying Arensberg to arm his people.

But there was a note—a small one, it is true, yet one which went the straightest to Rupert’s heart. It was from the son of the renowned Silvester Von Schauenburg. His noble father had lately confided his education to Melancthon, and thence had sprung a community of pursuits and feelings between himself and Rupert.

“DEAR RUPERT,—I go to Worms to-morrow. My father orders me; and, oh, joy! he has given me a

troop. You will not be a laggard, will you? Shall they burn our good Father Martin?

“Thine,

“SCHAUENBERG.”

“Wittemberg, March 4, 1521.”

“Thou shalt go, Rupert,” returned his mother. “Essel can and will take care of us.”

The above will somewhat illustrate the feeling that obtained among the nobility of Saxony and the adjoining States at this period. As may be gathered from the subsequent bold speech of Duke George—and his testimony may be regarded as the more incontrovertible, seeing that he was the inveterate enemy of Martin Luther—the great German people had long been suffering innumerable wrongs from the Popes of Rome. What for centuries had been presented by the Emperors as a gift to the Holy See was demanded as a debt. The emissaries of Rome invented every day some new scheme by which to control, or mutilate, or even sell the ecclesiastical benefices of the realm. Every order and degree of crime was bargained for and permitted. Wealthy criminals received tolerance until their wealth failed them, and then, but not till then, their punishment was pitiless. The Popes invariably gave to their own creatures the reversion of benefices, to the wrong of those to whom those benefices belonged.

“Indulgences,” exclaimed Duke George — bigoted son and bigoted champion though he was of the

Church of Rome — “Indulgences, which should be accorded for no other purpose than that of a soul’s salvation—Indulgences, which one ought to deserve only in return for prayers, for fastings, for works of charity—are held up at common auction. . . . Ah! it is this scandal which you clergy give us, which hurries so many miserable souls into a damnation that is eternal. A universal Reformation we must have.”*

Perhaps—for who, and of most men, who more than Martin Luther, comprehensive and acute as he was in his survey and estimate of men and things, could have been indifferent to these movements of his outer world?—perhaps, we say, the great Reformer often gathered strength of purpose from considerations which facts, such as these, must have inevitably suggested!

Some weeks rolled on, each one bringing him messages from the leading knights of Germany. The father of the youth whose letter we have just quoted, Von Schauenberg, offered to defend his cause with troops. So did Franz Von Sickingen and Ulrich Von Hutten.

He was not to go to Worms unbefriended.

One evening he was alone; Melancthon, Cruciger, Amsdorff, these three had but a few moments before left him to his solitude. He was making arrangements for his perilous visit to Worms. But how can he traverse the country? He is a poor monk, and vast though hath been his influence over men, rich as well as poor, he hath no means for defraying his expenses.

“I will walk,” he said to himself most resolutely.

* D’Aubigne, vol. ii., p. 201.

“ With my staff will I pass over Jordan. Better fight for Christ without purse or scrip, than with the aid of mammon.”

He was busily employed in making notes and references to aid him on that trial which, even before he had received an Imperial summons, he had determined to undergo. Then, on having finished his notes and references, he was fitting up his poor knapsack, intending to begin his pilgrimage, when a lay-brother of the monastery placed in his hands two heavily burdened packets.

“ A hundred gold pieces ! and from the Lord Taubenheim ! Fifty more ! and from Von Schart. May God forefend, lest I should be paid here, and not hereafter !” Luther cried devoutly.

“ But,” added he, “ this will expedite my pilgrimage to Worms, and I shall be fresher for the contest between Christ and Belial. O Lord ! marvellous is thy loving kindness ; therefore, thy saints put their trust underneath the shadow of thy wings.”

He had scarcely uttered his thanksgiving before the lay-brother appeared again.

“ The Lord Caspar Sturm of Oppenheim, in the name of his Grace the Emperor, demands to see you, Reverend Father.”

“ He is, indeed, welcome. Conduct him hither, my son.”

The knight shortly entered ; and after a few unusually grave courtesies, he handed to Doctor Martin an Imperial mandate, as follows :—

"HONOURABLE, DEAR, AND DEVOTED LUTHER,—
Ourself and the States of the Holy Roman Empire,
assembled at Worms, having resolved to demand an
explanation from you on the subject of your doctrines
and your books, we forward you a safe-conduct, to
ensure your personal immunity from danger. We
would have you immediately set forth on your journey
hither, so that within twenty days of the receipt of
our mandate, you may appear before us and the States.
You have neither violence nor snares to fear. Relying
upon our Imperial word, we expect your obedience to
our earnest wishes.

"CHARLES."*

"I will leave you, Reverend Father, until to-morrow, when, I trust, you will be prepared to answer the Emperor," said Count Caspar, as Doctor Martin read and re-read the Imperial rescript, and was deliberating whether or no he should entrust himself to the Herald's guidance.

"Be it so, my lord," answered Luther. "I gratefully accept your offer; not that I need time to help me to decide; nevertheless, I would meet my friends in council. To-morrow, let it please your lordship; and at what time?"

"At mid-day, shall it be, Reverend Father?"

"At mid-day, my lord."

* Note 13.

CHAPTER XVI.

As the object of this narrative is not so much to give a consecutive history as to reach by leaps, not unnatural we hope, distant positions in the lives of the chief actors upon the scene, we would now place ourselves beside the great Reformer, shortly before he entered Worms. Some few remarks, however, we would premise. On that morrow to which the close of our last chapter referred, Martin Luther consented to accompany the Herald, though he had, in conference with his friends, met with the most urgent entreaties and remonstrances against his obeying the Imperial summons, they quoting the sad instance of the martyr Huss in support of their distrust in Imperial safe-conducts ; and though the Herald himself admitted the step to be full of peril, seeing that, in the teeth of the Emperor's words of kindness and promises of impartiality, he had allowed the writings of the accused to be condemned and burned before his eyes.

It was on this very morrow, and when this last ominous fact came to the ears of Luther, and while Count Caspar was expecting every moment that such

news would shake the resolution of even so courageous a man as Martin Luther, that the latter uttered the memorable words, and to the Count himself—"I will repair thither" (to Worms), "though I should find there as many devils as there are tiles upon the house-tops."

A careful study of his journey from Wittemberg to the outskirts of Worms would give a fairer idea of the indomitable courage and (through God's grace) the ever self-replenishing faith of Martin Luther, than could any observation of his conduct in the immediate crises of his life. Many a tame and fainting spirit will show courage when there is no alternative save that of daring or of death. But when the probabilities of safety are on the side of cowardice, and when the judgment of the prudent, and the tears of the affectionate, advocate such cowardice (veiling it under other and less offensive names); it is then that moral heroism especially magnifies itself, in refusing to succumb to either the calculations of selfishness, or the insinuating influences of respect and love.

Such tests of his courage, of his confidence in God, of his high consciousness of duty, Luther was called to undergo during this ominous journey.

We will mention some few of the incidents whence we may learn the discouragements against which he had to battle, and the impulses to spiritual bravery and perseverance that he met with on his route.

As he drew near Erfurt—that scene of the trials of his boyhood, of his vows monastic, of his collegiate

triumphs—John Crotus, the Rector of the University, Eobanus, professor of rhetoric, and Justus Jonas, accompanied by nearly forty horsemen, met him to give him welcome. This for a moment cheered him, though he was physically very ill, and his native melancholy was beginning to hover over him with the dark shadow of its wings. The affectionate escort led him up to the gate of that very convent, every cell, nay every stone of which spoke to him of the past—spoke to him of woes endured and overcome, of fairest promises of literary ease and honour which he had thrown aside. He heard their voices, and when the aged Prior, John Lange, and Bartholomew Arnoldi Usingen, presented themselves at the porch to meet him and to re-embrace him in the arms of ancient brotherhood, the peace, the security, the facilities for the acquisition of learned lore, presented such a contrast to the strifes and dangers and cares of his present condition, that a deep and un-manning sigh escaped him.

That sigh only lasted for a moment. The instinct of his renewed soul instantly apprized him of his moral danger, and a merciful incident was made the means of helping him to throw off the first taste of the narcotic.

“ See, my father,” he exclaimed to John Crotus, as he pointed to a small wooden cross upon a grave—“ see, my father, *he* reposes there, while I——” and he turned his gaze to heaven.

With such feelings did he enter his old convent.

But nothing could retain him within its walls. No

warm friendly greetings, no reverential admiration, no sympathetic hope, could make him linger in the refectory, dear as it was in its associations.

He must fly back to *that* grave. He sat upon it in the uttermost abstraction from earth, communing with the dead. What was all earth to him? The brand of an anathema was upon his forehead! "Am I," he cried, "an object of scorn and of avoidance among 'the spirits of the just made perfect?'"

It was the grave of one of the young brother monks, who in earlier days had been a large sharer in his studies, and prayers, and affections.

Worn down with pains of body, which seized him while at Eisenach, and which threatened to arrest his journey altogether; distracted by numerous entreaties to forego his purpose by friends, among whom were even Bucer and the Elector Frederick's secretary Spalatin; besought to return home by no less an one than Glapion, the Emperor's own confessor, who warned him that if he entered Worms he would be burned: notwithstanding all, he still "stedfastly set his face" to go unto the city of the Diet.

When near Nuremberg, and while contending against these temptations, he received a letter from a pious priest, exhorting him to persevere for the glory of God. That letter enclosed a portrait of Savonarola, the martyr for liberty and for the faith. The great monk of Wittemberg pressed the portrait to his heart, kissed it, and, as if in inspired communion with the glorified

confessors of the truth, chanted aloud as he pursued his way, "The noble Army of Martyrs praise Thee, O God!"

But the Tempter was not to be daunted by such failures. Let but this monk reach Worms, and thus show his faith in the truth, and thus obtain the means of confessing that faith—albeit it were by death—and the long quietude of ages of spiritual darkness would be disturbed, and for evermore!

So at Oppenheim Martin Luther had to meet another wile.

Count Caspar, the Emperor's Herald, whose presence hitherto had been one grave impediment to his desertion from his purpose, if he had ever thought of such, now left him free and unconstrained.

Justus Jonas, Schurf, Amsdorff, others, who accompanied him, instantly exhorted him to fly.

"Fly!" exclaimed Luther, "never! I will enter Worms in the name of Jesus Christ."

At length, on the 16th of April, 1521, he came in sight of Worms. He was seated, with three companions, in a plain, open Saxon waggon: these companions were his own brother Jacob Luther, Amsdorff, and Von Suaven, a noble of Pomerania. Before the carriage there rode Count Caspar (who had rejoined him), bearing the escutcheon of the Emperor, and surrounded by his suite.

At every whirl of the wheels of his waggon the imperial flags, the towers, the steeples, the glistening blades and cuirasses of the soldiery upon the ramparts;

and, lastly, an impetuous crowd of cavalry (whether in friendship or from curiosity he knew not) bursting from the gates: all these revealed themselves thus gradually.

His brave, his intrepid heart beats quick. His features, so habitually cheerful and florid, became pallid. His eye, ordinarily so unconstrained—for his conscious strength, rarely felt effort to which the eye might have to show ■ constraint responsive—became fixed.

“It is not too late, dear, dearest brother,” exclaimed Jacob Luther; “let us turn back home, or they will murder thee.”

“Remember John Huss, dear Martin,” implored Justus Jonas. “Doth God and doth His Christ call thee to put faith in promises that may be lies?”

Von Suaven said nothing; but the grim moustache of the brave noble quivered, and sitting as he was in the carriage, opposite to Martin Luther, he turned his head on the pretext of looking out for the horsemen who were dashing forth from the gates of Worms, and strove to conceal his feelings, meanwhile fingering the pommel of his sword.

Von Suaven had not long to look; for rapidly, as if in flight from death, with his spurs deep in the flanks of his steed, and the noble brute, obeying those spurs with such an unrestive speed as proved that he felt the goad to be necessary, not cruel, a young officer flew to meet the waggon.

He bore a letter in his hand. As he drew in his

horse, his speed had been such that the horse fell upon his haunches.

"Ha! my dear Lord Rupert," exclaimed Luther, as his eye saw who the eager messenger was.

"Haste, haste, Father!—read, read!" said the noble youth, in a low tone, handing to him the letter.

Doctor Martin smiled quietly; but it was so lovingly that the impetuous Rupert felt no chagrin at the contrast between his own ardour and the calmness with which the other took the letter and opened it.

He read:

"DEAR FRIEND,—I am with the Elector. I know his mind. Enter not Worms.

"SPALATINUS."

Luther did not shudder. His manliness of heart, supported by the highest, sternest convictions of duty and self-sacrifice, kept him from shuddering at a prospect which, though for weeks it had been appalling, was, by this last note, and from a friend so dear, so enlightened, and from his intimacy with the wise Elector, so commanding in his influence, made decisive in its threatenings.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ bless thee!" cried Luther, as he reached forth his hand to the young noble, who was now sitting calmly upon his horse, and looking earnestly and ingenuously anxious. "Our Lord Jesus Christ bless thee, my dear young lord!" And with a

movement that called Rupert's ears near to his lips, he whispered :—

“Be sure to meet me, and ask my lord the Count to accompany you if possible, wheresoever I may be placed, to-night. Am I understood, my son?”

A warmer grasp of the hand was the only answer.

Then came one of the finest, most heroic, most devout passages of this bold confessor's life.

Death—death in its most fearful form, that of the stake—confronted Martin Luther. It is true that he bore with him the safe-conduct of the Emperor; but not only did he know that Imperial safe-conducts had before been falsified, through the logic of the Church of Rome, witness, for instance, the case of John Huss; not only was he weakened, both in body by sickness, and in spirit by the counter-entreaties of his fastest and wisest friends, whose judgments about the truthfulness of the Church of Rome were, he felt, well founded; but the Emperor himself, seduced by Roman priests, had already pronounced his condemnation.

Nevertheless, this heroic Christian man, strong in the truth which he had learned from Holy Scripture; strong in the fidelity of God's promises; strong in the aid of God's Holy Spirit; strong in his anticipations of the civil and spiritual deliverance of, not merely his own Fatherland, but of all lands, from the low, selfish, uncivilizing, soul-destroying tyranny of Rome, was enabled to gather up all his forces of thought, of feeling, and of physical energy.

He arose in his waggon, and while his fellow-travellers and the numerous horsemen who had at length arrived, were expecting him to speak, and while the town was before his sight, where he knew the concentrated power of Rome and the political considerations of the Cæsar were anxious to obtain him as a victim, he raised himself erect in the wagon, and sang the hymn, the words and music of which he had only two days before improvised.

It has been called the *Marseillaise* of the Reformation.*

■ A safe stronghold our God is still,
A trusty shield and weapon ;
He'll keep us clear from all the ill
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The ancient prince of hell
Hath risen with purpose fell,
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour—
On earth is not his fellow.

“ With force of arms we nothing can,
Full soon were we down-ridden ;
But for us fights the proper Man,
Whom God himself hath bidden.
Ask ye, Who is this same ?
Christ Jesus is his name,
The Lord Zeboath's Son,
He and no other one,
Shall conquer in the battle.

* Note 14.

“ And were this world all devils o’er,
And watching to devour us,
We lay it not to heart so sore,
We know they can’t o’erpower us.
And let the prince of ill
Look grim as e’er he will,
He harms us not a whit,
For why? His doom is writ—
A word shall quickly slay him.

“ God’s word, for all their craft and force,
One moment will not linger,
But, spite of hell, shall have its course,
’Tis written by his finger.
And though they take our life,
Goods, houses, children, wife,
Yet is their profit small,
These things shall vanish all,
The city of God remaineth.”

As Martin Luther chanted forth the above sublime hymn—a hymn which he had, as if under inspiration, extemporised and set to heavenly music only two days before—and as his brother, and Amsdorff, and others who had accompanied him from Oppenheim, rose, and with bared heads, joined in the chorus of the consecrated watchwords against tyranny over thought, cavaliers who had rode out to do honour to the great Protestant doffed their morions, peasants who in thousands had swarmed around him fell upon their knees, and all of them catching both the words and the hymn notes re-chanted—

"*God's word*, for all their craft and force,
One moment will not linger,
But, spite of hell, shall have its course,
"T is written by his finger."

The waggon in which Luther sat advanced onward slowly indeed, for the vast crowd filled up the road.

At length, amid nobles and knights, amid great German merchants and tradespeople, amid the cheers and prayers of a host of artisans and labourers, preceded by the Herald of the Cæsar, the Imperial eagle borne aloft before him, he approached the gate of Worms.

Ominous escort was this for a poor monk ! Ominous, indeed : whether for a death of high mark, or for a triumph, who could then say ?

Martin Luther looks so calm, he is such a contrast of self-possession to his companions in the waggon, that observers who knew not his person, might think him merely some official of the Empire.

Every eye is directed to the carriage, as the portcullis is withdrawn. Count Caspar, the Imperial Herald, is annoyed at a want of homage from the soldiery. And his escort is overflowing with oaths and curses at the sentinels.

But all of them are looking beyond the immediate escort of the knight. Their eyes are rivetted upon *one* man ; but strange to say, that man on whom they thus look attentively, is not Martin Luther. It is some one else, and some one different.

He is standing underneath a corner of the gate. Though his dress is grotesquely exaggerated, though he wears upon his head a cap most egregiously surmounted with colours, though bells tingle the moment that head shakes or moves, yet, what from other men would have aroused laughter, and scorn, and jokes, now only quickened the ears and curiosity of the bystanders.

He is the Duke of Bavaria's jester.

That name of jester is, now-a-days, misapprehended. Men, at all times, unhappily for themselves, would have the voice of wisdom to assume the guise of flattering servitude. And oftentimes wisdom has chosen to meet this humour, in order indirectly to correct it. The jesters and fools of former days were frequently and consciously such teachers of grave truth.

The jester whom we have mentioned was standing beneath the gate of Worms, when Luther's waggon approached. In curious contrast to his fool's dress, he was holding in one hand a cross, and in the other a lighted taper. As Doctor Martin entered the gateway grave, pale, prayerful, resolute, even the jester stood to pay him reverence ; and hoping by his enigma to serve the great advocate of true human happiness, he shouted, "*Ecce advenit quem expectamus in tenebris*,"* whilst he vehemently brandished his torch beneath the archway.

"Then, my friend, I will bring light to thee and thy companions," said Luther cheerily, and with a

* Lo ! he whom we from below are waiting for, is coming.

look which the jester immediately understood. That look so touched him, that, mere jester though he was to all appearance, he threw off his cap and bells, fell upon his knees, and besought the blessing of Doctor Martin.

It was an exquisite trait in the character of Luther, that he entered genially (meanwhile preserving the integrity of his principles and the sanctity of his office) into the innocent feelings of human nature, whatsoever might be their phase.

“Jester,” he said, as he placed his finger upon the brow of the young man, who, professionally, was so wild, so inconsiderate, and so reckless in his gibes, right and left, whether at the Priests of Heaven or at the Laity—“Jester, may God Almighty guide thee, bless thee! Perchance, wit and wisdom must, even still, wear disguises. God bless thee, may'st thou soon find that thy wit and drollery can do good service and without a mask!”

“Hist, hist, Reverend Father!” whispered the jester. “The wolf complains that the lamb hath defiled the stream.”

“Doth my Reverend Father catch my meaning?” he asked a moment afterwards, Luther looking on him with his penetrating eye, anxious to find out thoroughly his warning.

“I *do*, my son.”

“May a poor jester seek out your Reverence, and at any hour?”

“At any hour you shall be right welcome.”

Amid all such contrarieties of feeling, of encouragement and dismay, of evil omens and good omens, of promises and threatenings, Martin Luther entered Worms.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON the evening of this most memorable day, the day on which Martin Luther entered Worms, the entire city was in the height of excitement; some of the population from chagrin, others from affectionate alarm, others from chivalrous sympathy, others from political disquietude.

In the first place, every effort of chicanery, which the court of Rome had brought to bear in order to deter Luther from appearing at the diet, had proved useless. Glapion, the active agent of Pope Leo X., now found all his ostensibly friendly warnings to the great Reformer to have been powerless. The Papal emissaries did all they could, but they did all in vain, to induce Doctor Martin to return homewards, having, if they succeeded, the ulterior purpose of showing him up as a coward, a recreant, and conscious that he had no defence to make.

The whole Papal party, therefore, were in terrible chagrin, when they found that, in spite of all their efforts, the remonstrant against their errors and their vices would have a hearing.

"Never despair, however," exclaimed the Papal Nuncio, to his secretary. "His Holiness has written to the Emperor, desiring him *not* to observe the safe-conduct to this devil's spawn. He shall burn yet!"

"His Grace the Emperor has pledged his royal word far otherwise," the secretary insinuated.

"And who is to keep faith with heretics?" demanded Aleander.

Such was the scene, and such was the colloquy in the chambers of the Pope's grand functionary!

"He'll be burnt, that to a surety," said Von Hirschfeldt to John Schott, as they walked away from the lodgings where these two great Protestant nobles had left their friend, their spiritual Father, Doctor Martin. "He'll be burnt!"

"Then they shall make their pile out of our lances," murmured Von Schott.

"Doth Almighty God require a man to thrust himself into the lion's mouth, or rather into the serpent's toils?" asked Amsdorff of Melancthon.

"Young lions even, dear Amsdorff," returned Melancthon. "'seek their meat from God.' Fear not, our Father will not be devoured."

"Luther, good Spalatin, will be lost. Save him, how can I? Dare I—circumstanced as I am, the avowed friend of our young Emperor, and, sooth to say, the setter of the crown of Charlemagne upon his head—

dare I now aim to countermove in this sad game with Rome?" inquired Frederick the Wise, of his confidential secretary and servant.

"Doctor Martin," returned Spalatin, in deep sorrow, "is in peril, peril uttermost. And all the world knows, continued the faithful friend of Luther—"all the world knows that your Highness sanctions him, if not more."

"Enough, enough, Spalatin," returned the Elector; "now proceed to business."

And, meanwhile, in other not less important places, there were scenes of the same varied and ever-varying excitement.

A troop of cavaliers might have been seen threading their way through narrow streets, flanked by tall, many-gabled houses, all of them so very grave and silent, so fixed in feature, so thoroughly armed and so obviously awake to immediate duty, that a bystander might have concluded that they were bent upon some secret and dangerous enterprise.

This, however, was not the case. Indeed, had it been so, their visages would have shown just as much determination; but certainly not so much care.

"Is this the Strasse, good Mellendorf?" asked a knight, who seemed to be the leader of the little company.

"It is, my lord," replied the other; "and yon brick house, with the light in the third story, was where I saw Doctor Martin landed by Von Schott and Hirschfeldt."

"Hist! hist! brother Arensberg," whispered a gallant youth, who was abreast the knight. "Hist! do you hear?"

This was caused by the notes of a flute, now indulging in the softest cadences, and, anon, rising into loud, rapid, triumphant keys.

Arensberg listened, and then looked towards the spot whence the music issued.

There, from an open lattice, appeared the very man of whom they had come in quest. There, and upon the window-sill, leaned Martin Luther, his eyes directed to the starry heavens, and his flute pouring forth harmonies and bursts that seemed to aim at accord now with the gentle music of the spheres, and then again with the struggling clouds.

"Halt, friends!" said Count Arensberg, in a low tone. "Let us wait and let us hearken."

Soon the notes of Luther's flute died away, and then there followed a deep, musical voice, chanting forth—

"And were the world all devils o'er,
And watching to devour us,
We lay it not to heart so sore,
We know they can't o'erpower us.
And let the Prince of ill,
Look grim as e'er he will,
He harms us not a whit:
For why? His doom is writ—
A word shall quickly slay him."

The fact was—and deeply interesting it is, as showing forth the calm courage and the high faith of Luther

—that, though he had just been left alone by friends who were alarmed—friends, whose prowess and daring none could gainsay; and though they had each and all implored him to fly, or a fiery death would be sure to meet him; and though he was waiting every moment for some summons from the Emperor to make his perilous confession, yet was his soul kept in such blessed equipoise that it could thus indulge itself.

No sooner had he finished the above stanza of his hymn—a hymn, under the trumpet-notes of which the great German nobles, and the freedom-loving German people, warmed into enthusiasm, as did the Greeks of old under the songs of their Tyrtæus—than the troop of cavaliers, who had been listening, hastily tore their swords from their scabbards, and amid the clangor, as they crossed their weapons in friendly covenant, Luther heard them loudly, and perchance unmusically, shouting the stanza that followed:—

“ God's word, for all their craft and force,
One moment will not linger;
But, spite of hell, shall have its course,
'Tis written by His finger.”

Count Arensberg had done his utmost to repress this outburst, but in vain. He had done so, not so much because he failed in sympathy with the feelings it exhibited, as because he was intensely anxious to escape observation and remark, he being an officer so high in the councils of his immediate sovereign the Elector.

But, as we have said, his efforts had been all in vain; and it was with a somewhat disturbed feeling, approaching almost to anger, that he ascended the stairs and gained admission to the apartments of Doctor Martin. His friends followed him, in high excitement.

"You have caught me, my good lord," cried Luther, holding forth his broad, hearty hand, "you have caught me. I was only preparing my rehearsal."

"God grant it be one, Reverend Father," answered Arensberg. "We have come hither, first to avow our sympathy; and, secondly, to ask what commands your Reverence would issue for your flight from Worms," he added, with grave emphasis.

"Flight, my lord?" demanded Martin Luther. "Why, I came here only a few hours ago. Why should I fly?"

"Yes, fly! and we will bear you company. Fly! for you have to deal with men that have no honour," interposed Rupert. "Fly! there is our own good castle; but reach it, and you are safe."

"Is this your mission, my Lord Arensberg?" returned Martin Luther. He took no heed of the entreaties of the younger noble, though his affectionate smile upon him showed how thoroughly he appreciated his ardour.

"Is this, and this *only*, the object of your mission?" he asked again, as Count Arensberg stood before him, silent.

"Then you will not fly, Reverend Father?"

"Fly? never! Did I not *come* hither? Who forced me? Have I not a duty to perform? And you, my lord, must tell me that no soldier should shrink from *duty*. I am the soldier of Jesus Christ. Here I stand."

"Then we will all stand by you! Brothers, we will, will we not? We will never play fast and loose. Be of good courage, Father Martin."

So saying, Count Arensberg was about to take his leave, when Doctor Martin stayed him.

"Give me but some few moments with you, my good lord," said Luther. "I have that whereof to speak to you, which needs must be in private. No treason, I can tell you," he continued, turning to the young noble beside the knight. "Did I not myself invite your brother to a private interview?"

"You are alone, already," answered Rupert, smiling, as he retired and beckoned to his escort to retire with him.

And then came another and equally characteristic trait of the great Reformer. Ready was he always to diverge off from his personal interests, in order to promote or to sympathize with the interests of others. So, even at this his most fearful personal crisis, he thought for others.

"My lord," said Luther, so soon as they were alone, "can you obtain leave of absence from our good Elector? Try, and by all means, to gain it, and hasten homeward."

"In God's name why, Reverend Father?" exclaimed the Count.

"Can you recall, my lord, when you first met with that Father Antonio, whom long ago you brought from Italy together with the learned Abbott?"

"The last time I saw him was at Rome, at the table of Von Teutleben, or I am much deceived," returned Arensberg.

"Is there any uncertainty about it?"

"Somewhat; for if it was he, he was much disguised."

"As what?"

"As a gay and jovial cavalier."

"The very man! Then I was not mistaken," murmured Luther. "My dear lord," he added in a louder tone, "the perils that are around myself—many and great as they appear—cannot make Luther ungrateful for your kindness and the kindness of your house. That villain I have seen recently at Wittemberg; and I know he is prowling around your castle. Repair home instantly, or"

"Alas!" groaned Arensberg, "I am sworn to keep about the person of his Highness."

"Then bear this note to the Elector. It may be that he will grant what perchance is the last request of his poor servant. And now adieu! my son. Come weal, come woe to me, forget not thou, amid all the happiness that may await thee, that man's highest honour is to be the soldier of the Son of God!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE have been compelled, for a time, to lose sight of Castle Arensberg and its inmates. Our last look at them was when Rupert was taking his leave of the Countess, his mother. He was enthusiastically intent upon the stirring events at Worms, and most specially upon being in the neighbourhood of Martin Luther, for whose safety he felt so anxious, and who—so he had heard—was about to be summoned to appear before the Diet.

As we have said already, the command of the baronial fortress was committed to the veteran Essel; and right manfully and shrewdly did he fulfil his office. It was not that the country around was in the excitement of insurrection; neither was it that forces of an enemy at hand called for watch and ward, that made him wakeful and determined.

“I have,” said he to himself, “to guard against no factious peasantry. There are no foes with culverins, or mines to batter or uproot these good walls. But, mayhap, I shall be called to fight with what is worse, with lying, eaves-dropping, intriguing monks. Ah!

ah! my good Lørd Pope," cried the irreverent old soldier, "none of your craft has lost scent of a fair, rich damsel. Methinks I hear already the baying of your bloodhounds."

To explain all this it is needful to remark that Essel, now grown old, had from long and shrewd observations, drawn sad and aught but complimentary conclusions as to the untiring purpose—especially when gold or vengeance was concerned—of the Papal See. And no quietude, however long, could have so far hoodwinked him, as that he should even suppose that that See would submit tamely to the abduction of the Lady Bianca.

"Has any one been admitted within the castle to-day?" he asked of Gerard his servant, who was standing one evening behind his chair.

"No one, mein Herr, so far as I can learn, save a poor pedlar who brought his wares wherewith to amuse the ladies for their own sakes, and certes to pilfer for his own."

"Is he gone forth again?"

"Faith! the buttery, good master, is not empty," returned the servant.

"Then he is here still, you knave?" demanded Essel, angrily.

"I will go to see, mein Herr;" and the servant was hastily withdrawing.

"Bring him here, and make him show me his wares for sale," commanded Essel; "and look thee that he brings them all."

It was not long before the servitor returned, followed by a man clothed in a dress travel-worn and travel-stained, and bearing upon his back a heap so huge that he seemed taxed to his utmost strength in order to sustain it.

"Have they given thee below too much good cheer? or art thou tired out with carrying that frightful hump, master pedlar, that thy limbs now tremble so?" asked the governor of the castle.

"I am worn and weak, may it please your nobleness."

"Nobleness! bah! I am no noble, and I have no nobleness; so, prithee, give me no nonsense. Answer me, and be straightforward, master merchant."

The pedlar looked aghast—his face became pale—he feared that he was about to undergo an unusual questioning.

"Will you deign to look upon my poor wares?" he asked most humbly. "Mayhap there may be among them somewhat that might please your lordship, or might become a fair present to your fair ladies in the castle."

"Then open them up, sir merchant, but plague me not, do you hear, I say? Plague me not with any more of your noblenesses and lordships; show me your wares."

They were soon laid out before him; and Essel while, apparently, he was interested in the minutest objects, and while buying article on article, was covertly examining the face, judging about the simulated tones of the voice, and

examining the different corners of the boxes of the pedlar.

"You can leave these packages with me for to-night, master; can you not?" he asked. "I see so many things, each of them worth having; but I would have time to choose among them."

"Gladly, most gladly, gracious lord, would I do your bidding; but, alas! I must be at the fair at Leipsic in three days hence, or I am ruined," returned the pedlar.

"You shall have a horse or horses to speed you on your journey, master merchant, so you can safely stay to-night," said Essel.

"Pardon me," cried the humble pedlar; "but my brother Bartolomeo is in waiting for me without the gates of your castle."

"Then begone, sir, and take your moneys with you; I will purchase your wares, all of them; and may the Blessed Virgin assoil you both!" said Essel.

"What and take my trunks, good lord!" almost shrieked the merchant.

"Yes, take your trunks; and I will pay for them," returned Essel, grimly. "I have a fancy for them."

"You shall have all! all! my noble lord," returned the pedlar. "I have but to take the papers of my poor license."

"Take them then; but first let me see them," returned Essel.

The pedlar went eagerly to work in the unstrapping

of his goods. Meanwhile Essel watched, yet seemed not to watch.

"May I see those papers?" he asked, as the pedlar was in the midst of assumed activity, busying himself in disarranging and then re-arranging the contents of his bales, and as Essel's eye caught him in the act of crumpling up some papers which, with the hope he was undetected, he was endeavouring to secrete.

"May I see those papers, master merchant?" again asked the pertinacious seneschal. "Nay, not those," he added, as the pedlar gathered up and presented some stray ones. "The fancy is still strong upon me, I would know what is in thy right hand."

The villain finding himself detected, hastily unclasped his hand, and as quick as light, tore a dagger from his bosom. As quick, however, Gaspard seeing his movement, hurled him with a stunning force upon the pavement, and there held him fettered in his gripe.

Essel had calmly seized upon the papers that had fallen, and, as if there was no strife around him, was eagerly intent upon their meaning, when some soldiers of the castle, aroused by the noise of the conflict, rushed into the apartment and aided Gaspard.

"Order the portcullis to be lowered instantly, and double the sentinels!" shouted Essel to an officer who had just appeared. There seemed to have been something threatening in the paper he had been reading.

"The Lady Bianca and Mistress Nina are walking

in the grounds, so please you Herr Essel. Shall we close the gates against them?" asked the officer.

"Donner und blitzen!" swore out the seneschal, "hie thee instantly with some men, good Franz, and be sure to escort them homeward. I will see to the gates myself."

The solution of all this is easy. Essel, whose faculties, chiefly in the exercise of sagacity, had been well trained for many a year, and who, ever since his noble master had confided the castle to his guardianship, had been night and day tormented with suspicions and presentiments, was not likely to let even a stray pedlar pass unscanned. That pedlar's face betrayed nothing, but the old seneschal winced more than once when some notes of the chapman's voice struck upon his ear. He thought and thought again that that voice he had heard before. Much it fretted him that by no effort of recollection could he identify it, and this annoyance of itself quickened him to still more earnest observation.

Then, too, in spite of the utmost cleverness, the pedlar had used phrases, had shown turns of thought, while descanting upon his wares, which Essel saw immediately, were unusual to men in his condition. Thence it was, although still somewhat in uncertainty, the seneschal felt called upon to make a search so curious, and apparently, so inhospitable.

And his suspicions were well-founded! The fact was, so he found after a moment's glance at the paper which the pedlar had endeavoured to suppress, that its

owner was none other than the Canon Antonio, the man who, in former days, had been so long domesticated in the castle, and towards whom Essel himself had ever felt an invincible, though an almost unaccountable aversion. Further, he found, from the same paper, on glancing onward, that he held a commission from Cardinal * * * * to seek aid and counsel from various staunch friends of the Roman See, wherewith to rescue from Castle Arensberg a noble lady, recreant from the Holy City, and to restore her back again to the proper authorities and guardianship of her native land.

On the instant, Essel, combining all this with the fact of the assumed disguise of Father Antonio, concluded that some deep and sagacious plot was in movement, and it would be absurd to conceal he felt the utmost alarm when he learned that the lady Bianca, at a crisis so perilous to herself, and with watchful foes in her very neighbourhood, was beyond the walls.

Some time followed upon Essel's giving his command for search after the wanderers, and yet no report arrived of either success or failure.

It was while every inmate of the castle was disturbed and anxious, and listening to each sound as it came to them from the surrounding forests—it was while the Countess-mother was sitting in a deep melancholy, broken only by intermediate bursts of active thought and as active command—it was while Essel was pacing the ramparts, with steps singularly unquiet

and irregular for his ordinarily composed pace, that the latter discerned, approaching the moat, a troop of horse.

“Down with the drawbridge!” he shouted to the soldiers who stood below.

Then rising erect and assuming an air of authority, which, from his long years of obedience to his lords he honestly felt did not belong to him, yet which he now thought it might be desirable for him to manifest, he awaited the arrival of the approaching visitors.

He was startled, we must say, as a loud blast, one peculiar to the noble House of Arensberg, greeted his ear. Still the wary seneschal, instead of rushing to the outer gates, as aforetime he would have done, in order to welcome back his master, stood firm in his suspicions and argued with himself, that even this might be a semblance and a snare.

Nevertheless he descended to the moat and prepared to do all his duties of hospitality or defiance.

“Lower the bridge, good Essel,” shouted the well-known voice of Arensberg, Essel’s lord and master. “Why,” quoth he, “one would suppose, from such strict guardianship, you suffering a strait siege.”

“Why all this severe precaution, my old friend?” asked the Count, the moment after he had placed foot upon the bridge and was within earshot of his seneschal.

“Only because I have just seized a spy within the walls,” returned Essel.

“And are all safe amongst you? My mother and

the Lady Bianca, are they both safe and well?" demanded Arensberg, hurriedly.

"Her ladyship is well, is safe," returned Essel, "so was the Lady Bianca, so was Mistress Nina, when I saw them at dinner, two hours ago. But"

"But, what *but*?" asked the Count anxiously.

"Mistress Nina, my lord, and the Lady Bianca are roaming in the forest, and I have sent out our men to meet them and escort them homeward."

"S'death!" exclaimed the knight, grinding his teeth with rage and apprehension. "They are in the forest, say you?"

"They went there to walk, this afternoon; but I knew not aught of it till"

Count Arensberg waited for no further explanation, but turning his horse's head and commanding Mellen-dorf to follow with his men, he rode back to the forest, and there, with an anxious and foreboding heart, directed them to scour the different spots which he knew were the favourite resorts of Nina, and to some one of which he deemed it likely she might have conducted her companion.

Most fortunate was it that he did so, for quickly his ears caught the sounds of clashing weapons, mingled with oaths and groans.

Rushing to a spot whence they seemed to issue, a strange and exciting scene met his eyes. At a glance he saw that a little band of his own retainers had been in deadly conflict with a strange and much larger troop, and that from the numbers of the former who were

lying weltering on the ground, it was nearly overpowered. One glance more—and it was an eager one, and in quest of Bianca and her companion—and he saw two female forms, and a soldier with a drawn sword standing over each of them.

But the villanous assailants gave neither to the Count himself, nor to any of his men, an occasion for exhibiting their chivalry. Their flight was instantaneous, arising not so much from cowardice as from the imposing force with which they were thus unexpectedly confronted.

“Seize all of them, and hold them in safe keeping; but slay none!” cried Arensberg, as his troopers dashed forward in pursuit, whilst he himself was hurrying to the side of the fettered women.

“The Lord of heaven be thanked—blessed be His name!—we are safe! we are safe!” murmured Nina from beneath the mufflers that had been drawn around her mouth, when her ears caught the sound of the knight’s voice.

Yet there was no one word of exclamation, or of surprise, or of gratitude, from the Lady Bianca, although in her self-possession, which she had retained notwithstanding the perils of the conflict, she had watched every movement, and had at once recognized the Count on his arrival.

“Bianca, dearest!” said Arensberg, with a voice strangely in its contrast of tenderness to the fierce spirit that breathed around them—“Bianca, dearest! God be thanked that we came in time.”

Oh! how cruel was the pang that shot through the heart of Nina, as these words were uttered. And the more so, perhaps, because Count Arensberg, in the confusion and excitement of the late strife, had mistaken her for Bianca. Shrouded as they both were by those who had been preparing to abduct them, he had concluded—falsely as it turned out—that the more vigorous struggler against the restraint imposed upon them, must have been the high-souled and determined lady of his love.

“ Help, help, my lord,” cried Nina, faintly, as the knight was proceeding to remove the bandages by which they were enthralled—“ help the Lady Bianca yonder,” she continued, “ I can quickly free myself from this thralldom.”

“ Ah!” exclaimed the Count, as he rushed off to the other prisoner, and with a promptness and an eagerness that gave a fresh pang to Nina.

But he found that this object of his anxiety was utterly unconscious. That heart, which had courageously braved disasters so many and so dire, and which had maintained such collectedness and had put forth such spontaneous energies, had at last sunk. It had sunk, partly from the outrageous insult of being touched and bound by ruffians; but chiefly from the feeling that now her rescue was to be owing to one whose long silence and apparent estrangement made any receipt of kindness from him a humiliation.

We have said that she had become unconscious. Slowly, carefully, and amid thoughts that made him

anew to fear that the destiny of his love would be an unhappy one—alarmed at, yet admiring, the strong emotions from which, he saw at once the swoon had followed—he walked beside the soldiers as they bore her form on a rude and suddenly constructed litter towards the castle.

Thither we need no longer follow them, save to say, for the explanation of our story, that Count Arensberg's anxious explanations of his enforced silence amply satisfied the Lady Bianca; and that Nina, meanwhile maintaining her self-composure — cruel, most cruel, though was the effort—urged and succeeded in her urgency in persuading the Countess, who was always very loth to part with her, to allow her to visit, for a time, her relations at Wittemberg. Poor Nina! She had behaved beautifully, with regard to Bianca, not indulging one jealous or angry feeling towards her. She had even, in a truly Christian spirit, in her private conversations with the Countess, combated the prejudices we have before said were entertained against an Italian daughter-in-law. Nina had kindly, fairly, and without one invidious suggestion, dwelt upon Bianca's attractive qualities, and presented in the most favourable light, her words and actions since her arrival at the castle. She descanted, too, upon the reverence and enthusiastic attachment with which Theresa, who had known her from childhood, spoke of her. Lastly, she touched upon the dignified resignation with which Bianca bore all her sorrows, and particularly her late trial with regard to her lover's

apparently strange silence. Now this Nina was urged to do by her appreciation of the morality of the Gospel—in that noble and practical precept—“Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.” She was urged, also, to do this by the disinterested nature of her love for Count Arensberg. She knew him to be strongly and gratefully attached to his mother, and that, therefore, it would be for his happiness that that mother should warmly and cordially receive to her affections, the lady of his choice. Nina felt that she possessed great influence over the Countess, though the latter would not have acknowledged it, even when acting under it.

She had never even allowed herself to indulge a hope of becoming the Count's wife. In the age in which she lived, especially in Germany, such a marriage would have been detrimental to him in many ways, and Nina, therefore, would not have desired it.

But the simple, hearty manner in which, while crushing every rebellious feeling in her bosom, she set herself by her gentle eloquence to smooth down all bitter feeling, whether in defending to Bianca, Count Arensberg's conduct during the Elector's prohibition, or in combating the prejudices of the Countess, was truly noble. Nina had but lately heard from a renovated Bible that, to use the emphatic language of St. Paul, the most costly offerings, even to giving the body to be burned, without charity availeth nothing; and this poor tried heart exhibited in this, her conduct, that charity without which all else is unacceptable to God. And oh! how true it is in the daily trials of domestic

life, woman is often called by God to show as much of real Christian heroism, as is displayed even by the martyrs for the faith, and more than is shown by the sternest ascetic of the cloister.

Yet Nina felt that she must, for her health's sake, have a respite from this hourly struggle; and therefore did she, as we have said, ask for and obtain the Countess's permission to retire to Wittemberg for a time.

In Wittemberg the interests of the Reformation and the fate of Martin Luther occupied nearly the whole population, for he was emphatically the man of the people, and the glorious doctrines he promulgated bore so immediately upon the civil and religious freedom of all ranks, that the excitement as to his fate and the progress of the Reformation was even more intense at Wittemberg, than in any other part of Germany. Nina, therefore, who with all the enthusiasm of her character had become a Lutheran Reformer, felt that the best relief for her private sorrows, would be the absorbing interest that was thrilling her own and every heart around her as to the proceedings of the Diet at Worms.

The state of public feeling throughout the country was as that of an all-pervading electric shock. Every individual who came within its influence, felt the current of its magnetic power as it flew from heart to heart; that influence which ultimately produced the mighty impulse which united so large a portion of the great German people in a protest against Papal practices and

errors, and, overleaping merely national boundaries, inspired afterwards the inhabitants of the Netherlands and of Britain to enter into an alliance against the common foe. How indomitable was that impulse we all may learn from the constancy with which men held their faith while the cruel Alva deluged the Netherlands with blood, and while England was illumined by the pyres of martyrs, through the relentless and bigoted cruelty of Queen Mary.

Bnt we must now leave Nina at Wittemberg.

CHAPTER XIX.

WE have at length arrived at the great crisis when the personal existence of Martin Luther, and when, above all, the interests of the still nascent Reformation were to be decided on.

It is not our province to give even a historical summary of the events that transpired when the great monk presented himself before the Emperor and his Estates at Worms. We have only to seize on sundry positions which he occupied, and whereon he showed those characteristics of self-distrust yet confidence in his cause—of loyalty to his earthly sovereign, yet supreme fealty to the King of kings—of thorough consciousness of his individual danger, yet high countervailing courage in suppressing fear—of bold straightforwardness yet acute subtlety and forecast in the management of his defence—of sternness and sometimes audacity, mingled with gentleness and a courteous spirit of honourable propitiation, for which latter qualities it would have been desirable that he had been more famed during his subsequent life.

On the night when Count Arensberg left him, as

we have described in a former chapter, so many and so tumultuous were his thoughts that sleep he could not. The Count had found him seated at the lattice of his room, playing upon his flute, and at intervals, either giving articulate voice to his music, or silently gazing on and communing with the bright stars and the azure depths above him.

But when left alone he threw himself upon the couch that had hospitably been prepared for him, yet the night brought him no opiate. Long before the stars of his evening's companionship had closed their eyelids he was up again, anxious, feverish, and re-seeking for the calming influences of prayer, of music, and of psalmody.

That his feelings were thus tumultuous, and that in their result they left a profound depression is, to our minds, a high proof, not merely of his enduring courage, but especially of his sincerity. You may, on good reason too, suspect a man who, without being a braggart, is uncompromising in his mere animal courage. Whereas, he who has first of all to combat with himself and to triumph over himself—to combat with and to triumph over his own doubts and anxieties and apprehensions, and self-questioning debates—such an one gives us at least a proof that his high masterhood is moral, and that his future prowess is not so much the consequence of physical impulse as of conviction.

Martin Luther was striving, we say, to dissipate by prayer, by psalmody, by music, those dark, leaden

clouds which were slowly, morosely, gathering on the horizon of his soul when the dawn of the natural day broke on him; and in the midst of these his attempts at self-relief, the Marshal Pappenheim and the herald arrived at his lodging, bearing an order from the Emperor which required him to appear before the Diet that day at four o'clock in the afternoon.

What was his intense anxiety, during that awful interval, may best be gathered from the prayer which, on authentic record, we know him to have uttered.

On the departure of the Marshal and his herald he fell upon his knees. His watchful friends, who were in adjoining chambers, heard and noted how he cried:—

“God, God, O my God! come Thou to my aid, and protect my cause and Thine against the wisdom of the world. Grant me this prayer, which Thou alone canst grant. It is Thy cause, O my God, and not mine; it is not for me, but for Thee, to defend me against the great ones of the earth. God of all time! come to my aid—that aid which none among men can afford me. Flesh is flesh; man a poor, weak, failing, faltering creature. O my God! hast thou not ears? Dost thou not hear me? Art thou dead? No, Thou canst not die. Then, O my God, aid me in the Name of thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, my strength and my help, my citadel and my rampart. Where art thou, O my God—where art thou? Come, come: I am ready to give up my life as ’t were a lamb’s. It is the cause of justice, it is Thy cause, and I will not separate myself from Thee. The world cannot prevail;

and were it given up to even a greater legion of devils, even though the work of Thy hands were to give way, and the earth open its abysses before me, I remain firm: my soul is Thine, and is Thine and with thee to all eternity! Amen. O, my God! aid me. Amen.”*

It was no strange thing that after such a prayer Martin Luther rose from his knees with renovated power and courage. He had—to use an expressive phrase of Holy Scripture—“taken hold of God’s strength,” and in competition with *that*, what were all the combined forces of Emperor and Electors, Dukes and Nuncios? He had repaired to the armoury of his Divine Master, had been clothed with His breast-plate, and entrusted with “the sword of His Spirit,” and what human corslet or human falchion could withstand him, poor monk though he was?

The hour of summons, and the summons, at length arrived; and Luther, rising cheerfully, exclaimed—and never had mortal man greater need of such a resolution, and, perhaps, never did uninspired man more thoroughly appreciate its import—“I will go in the strength of the Lord God, making mention of His righteousness, and of His only.”

Preceded by the herald and the marshal of the empire he essayed to traverse the streets, and to gain the Schloss where the Diet was assembled. But a crowd, dense and unyielding to even commands in the name of the Emperor, made every path, every avenue impassable. Near the threshold of the house he had

* Note 15.

just left, Martin Luther was there seen firm but not proud, although it was evident from their looks, their gestures, their words of encouragement, their prayers, that the thousands on thousands who were before him in the streets below and in the balconies, and even on the roofs above, had met not from curiousness to see a felon, but in sympathy with the champion of their earthly, and above all heavenly liberties.

The moment was perilous to Luther himself as well as to his imperial conductors. The latter were on the eve of failure in fulfilling the commands of their Sovereign, and the former, should he not present himself before the Diet, from whatever cause, would have given triumph to the Papal emissaries, who were dreading his appearance.

It was only by a device of the herald that the difficulty was evaded. Entering an adjoining house, he led the way through secret passages and over private gardens, and at last the little company gained the area in front of the Hall where the Diet was held.

Now came the moment when, if ever, Martin Luther's heart must have beat quick with awe. He is before the door which, on opening, is to place him in the very presence of his judges. Does that heart begin to play him false? It sinks, but it is more from the august character of the cause he is to uphold, than from the rank of the personages whom he is about to confront, or from any personal terror. But words of strong encouragement come to cheer him. There is

standing near the door the great General George Von Freunsberg, he who had in former years been so distinguished, and who, at a later period, won such laurels on the terrible battle-field of Pavia. Affectionately touching Luther on the shoulder, the noble veteran exclaimed, "Monk! monk! thou art about to make a passage and occupy a post more perilous than any which I and many other commanders ever knew in the bloodiest battle-fields. If thou art in the right, and sure of thy ground, go on in God's name and fear not; God will not forsake thee."

How could Martin Luther gaze unmoved upon that grand scene which presented itself the moment after the door opened, and the Marshal Von Pappenheim conducted him to the tribunal of the Diet? High upon the throne of the Cæsars there sat the youthful Emperor Charles V., monarch of numerous and mighty dynasties in both the Old World and the New. Beneath the same gorgeous dais, but on a chair of state one step below, reclined his brother the Archduke Ferdinand. On either side of them were ranged the six Electors of the empire; whilst around them might be seen Dukes and Margraves, Papal Nuncios, prelates, ambassadors, deputies from free towns, and grim warriors glistening in their steel panoply, and grasping with hands gauntleted the massive handles of their swords.

How could Martin Luther—bred as he had been in the shrinking retirement of a monastery, look unmoved upon a scene so imposing, knowing, as he did, that from

that dread tribunal there might soon issue a fiat that would consume him?

He *was* deeply moved; and anxious friends, some of whom were princes, seeing his emotion, hastened towards him, and, in spite of the dread imperial presence, said to him, "Fear not those who may kill the body but cannot kill the soul."

Luther trembled in his whole frame as he heard these words; but it was the trembling of the lion immediately before he shakes off the cold, shivering dew-drops.

Every one there could see what physical tension followed in the countenance of the imperilled monk. Many could see how, standing erect and looking reverentially, not audaciously, around upon his judges, his eye rested upon the noble face of his great patron and more immediate Sovereign, Frederick of Saxony, and how he strove by his modest yet manly cheerfulness to quiet the terrible anxieties which that great prince felt for him—anxieties which were betrayed by the unwonted paleness of the Elector.

We must leave it to history, whose task it is, to state with what chicanery his Papal accusers urged a question categorical, insisting that that question should be answered categorically, and with what honest adroitness he discomfited the intrigue. We must remit also to this same history to mention how much this his stratagem was misunderstood by both friends and foes; and what a terrific depression he had to undergo in consequence of that misunderstanding, one in which the Emperor himself so far shared with

his subjects that construing what was only a proof of Luther's acumen into an evidence of poltroonery, he said to those around him, "This man, at all events, won't make a heretic of me."

Further, we must omit all details of the interval that elapsed until the next sitting of the Diet, simply remarking, that pained to the very soul at the precocious distrust of his friends, even the fastest of them; and tempted, but resisting the temptation to reckless hardihood and effrontery by the jibes of his adversaries,—this poor monk, on the next day, calmly, dispassionately, and without one defect of reasoning, answered, with the coolest logic, the elaborate propositions of his adversaries, avowed his opinions and refused, even to the beard of the Emperor, to retract one iota of them; and after a peroration in the tongue of his own fatherland, and a second one in Latin, on which his remorseless enemies insisted (so soon as they saw his exhausted state, and hoped by this additional pressure to break him down); after all this, and as if to prove to the world for ever and for ever, how faith in truth and faith in God can reach its climax, in spite of all lowering influences that are physical, he first bent in homage to his earthly Monarch, raised himself erect again and, with his hand raised—in adjuration of the aid of the Eternal Monarch of the universe—he cried, "HIER STAHE ICH: ICH KAUN NICHT ANDERS: GOTT HELFE MIE!"*

* "Here I stand: I can do no otherwise: God help me!"

CHAPTER XX.

SOMEWHAT more than a fortnight after the events which we have just so summarily described, a small but distinguished party were in earnest conversation in the best (poor was the best) room of the sole hostelry in the little town of Eisenach.

They had been travelling hard and far during the day. This was evident, both from the nature and condition of their dress, as also, from those symptoms of fatigue which were betrayed by the ladies of the company.

“Are you not surprised that your brother fails to meet us, though he volunteered to assure us he would do so, by the trusty messenger who met us, miles from here, this morning?” asked an elderly lady of a noble-looking man, who was engaged in paying the duties of chivalrous homage to another, but much younger, lady.

“Rupert will soon be here, you may be certain, dear mother,” quickly returned her son. “And yet,” he continued, “his coming is of no moment whatsoever, so far as our morrow’s movements are concerned. I

have already sent Essel forward to the castle, and, after a good night's rest, you will all, will you not, dearest Bianca," he added, addressing her to whom his attentions had been devoted, "you will all, will you not, be fit to scale yonder hill, craggy though it is?"

A smile, and a grateful one, and one which conveyed assent, was the only answer from the wearied maiden.

"Hist! Arensberg," cried his mother, rising and hastening to the window. "There are sounds of an arrival!"

"Sounds indeed," said her son, smiling, and without leaving the neighbourhood of his enchantment, "but they are sounds of wheels not of cavalry; and I trow they must come from the waggon of some honest burgher, not from Rupert and his troop."

"Thank God! Oh, thank a gracious God!" exclaimed the Countess, clasping her hands in ecstasy, "though it is not my son, it is, nevertheless, one most dear to all of us."

"Who, who?" cried Nina, who was with them, rushing to the window and looking out.

Even the lovers could not withstand the contagion, and they both were instantly among the little party of observers.

Two low, rustic waggons had driven up to the gateway of the hostelry. They were occupied by men, most of whom were wearing the black robes of ecclesiastics. A throng of people was quickly gathering around the humble vehicles—and voices, few at first, but soon growing into one loud and fervent note of

acclaim, shouted, "Doctor Martin! the great Doctor Martin!"

True it was: Martin Luther was among the travellers. He had remained at Worms, for one week exactly, after his second and last appearance before the Diet. That week had been to him one of strife and emotion, almost ceaseless. But his firmness for the truth never deserted him a moment, although he knew that murderous emissaries were panting for his blood, and though the Emperor's fidelity to the safe-conduct he had given him had just undergone an ominous modification.

He is now, as we see him at Eisenach, on his return home to Wittenberg. He is standing up in his waggon, unconcerned with the efforts which several of his fellow-travellers are making, as they alight from their vehicles; nay more, he stands irresponsive to the affectionate greetings and thanksgivings of the crowd that presses around him. His broad-brimmed hat is off his head; he is gazing, with his strong, muscular features quivering with an emotion that even the Cæsar had been unable to extort, upon a house on the opposite side of the street; and soon again, his eyes run over the lanes, and alleys, and the quiet yet gloomy buildings of the old monastic town of Eisenach, and then, at last, they rest steadily and firmly upon the hill (or mountain, we may say) upon the summit of whose beetled brow there stood, and still stands, the castle of the Wartburg.

"Ah! dear brother Amsdorff," sighed Luther, when,

after this his survey of the little town and its adjoining castle, he sank down upon his seat, "here are scenes, and here associations are there, far more piercing to my poor heart than any I have so recently passed through. I have walked, and with bare and blood-frozen feet, over every causeway here, and have sung carols before every house, my hunger shrieking for a crust of bread. Often have I climbed yon hill, and should have fallen back fainting, for I was starved, but for the kind tree-roots that gave me hold, and the kind trees that gave me acorns. Often, often, has the good suttler of yon castle let me share of the crumbs that fell from his master's table. And there, look there," pointing with his finger to a low-gabled house, and his voice choking—"there on the sill of yonder threshold, I should have died, but for the blessed kindness of a second mother. Dear, angelic Frau Cotta!" he murmured, "thou gavest a poor wasted youth more than a cup of cold water. But," and his voice acquired a startling vigour, "ten years already hast thou left us, and thou hast meanwhile been drinking of the river that floweth fast by the throne of God!"

Such were the feelings wherewith Luther returned to Eisenach. In that miserable little town, whither for his schooling his poor parents had sent him in his infancy, he had undergone fierce pinches of want of bread; he had stood before the doors of its inhabitants, not clothed in the gay colours of a minnesinger, but in rags, cold and shivering; and when his carol was drawing to its close, he had often grasped with

triumph at the half-loaf of black bread which an honest and kind-hearted workman brought out to him ; and, alas ! as often he had fled away in terror as some rude churl had cursed him for his complaints, and threatened to set his wolf-hound upon his heels. He one day had been for some time groaning through want of food, and while his young, emaciated hands pressed his sides, in order to surprise his throes into a moment's stillness, he was resolving to abandon the martyrdom of learning, and to return to the mines in which his father was then so laboriously delving, when a kind-hearted woman (Frau Cotta was her name) opened her door, gently bore the poor exhausted boy into her house, wisely fed him and restored his strength, kept him with her, and thus saved the future Reformer of half Europe.

Strange contrast between this the condition of his childhood, and that in which he had now returned to Eisenach ! And yet even the latter, sublime though it was, was not without an anguish as acute and as threatening as had been his early poverty. He had just been standing fearlessly, and amidst ennobling associations, before an emperor and princes ; he who had almost knelt before a peasant's door for the rudest food. The voice that had moaned, and moaned in vain, amid sleet and snow, had become a trumpet-blast summoning, and responded to by the mightiest nations of the earth. And yet cruel perils confront his footsteps ! He may not perish by cold, but he may perish, and some few days hence, by flames !

Amsdorff, his faithful friend—that one who had clung

to his side throughout his late appalling trial, was remaining silent, in reverential sympathy with his feelings, when he was suddenly startled by an advancing hand which, passing himself, gently grasped one of Luther's.

"You here, my lord?" exclaimed Doctor Martin, so soon as he felt the touch, and as he raised his suffused eyes upon Count Arensberg, who had hastened to the Reformer's side, the moment he discerned his person.

"I am here; we are all here, Reverend Father," he returned emphatically.

"*All* here, my lord?" again asked Luther.

"*All!*"

But little time was lost before Luther was introduced by Arensberg to the room where the ladies were assembled. It was curious to observe how either party held friendly contest which should first recount the circumstances of the other. Our readers already know them, and so we content ourselves with adding, that Luther's history of his own proceedings was just that which some days before he had written to his friend Cranach, the celebrated painter.

"My arrival at Worms," said he, somewhat in the spirit of merry sarcasm, "was unexpected; and how the safe-conduct was observed you may have heard from the prohibition which met me on the way. I had supposed his Imperial Majesty would have assembled about fifty Doctors, and in a fair way have confuted the monk. But only thus much was done:—'Are these

books yours?' 'Yes.' 'Will you retract them or no?' 'No.' 'Then away with you.'"

Long into the night, after the ladies had retired, did Luther and the Count continue in earnest council.

"And you purpose then, my lord," said the former, as they were about to separate, "to leave your charge, to-morrow, at Castle Wartburg, and then to proceed quick to court?"

"Such, Reverend Father, I had resolved upon," returned the latter; "but the strange absence of my brother Rupert perplexes me, I must own. I sent to him a message, by our good friend Schwärtz, directing him to obtain for me the Elector's leave to do so. And then he returned an answer that he would be here himself this very night—where can he be?"

"Take a poor monk's advice," said Luther, after musing deeply, "and, instead of risking the displeasure of our wise sovereign, wait (shall I say?) at Erfurt. Perhaps," he added, "your brother may have been, unexpectedly, despatched elsewhere."

"And *your* purpose, Father?" inquired the Count.

"For Wittemberg, my lord; and if death await me, may our God grant it may be among scenes where I first saw the light of life!" was the rejoinder.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHILST we have been detailing some few of the events that took place during Martin Luther's most memorable appearance before the Diet, we have been forced to lose sight of facts, connected with his trial, which, though more general in their nature, are, nevertheless of indispensable importance to our narrative. We would, therefore, mention some of them.

The young emperor, Charles V., is not (and we now speak historically) to be regarded as having been a theological partizan against the great Reformer. It is true, that every hereditary and every educational tendency ought to have made him a faithful son of the Papal Church, and that, as such, his antagonism to the views of Martin Luther must have been direct and determined; seeing, especially, that he had never had an opportunity of judging the merits of that Reformer's movements. Still, this imperial child of the popedom was not without latent sympathies with one great purpose for which the monk at Wittemberg was contending. It could not escape his notice, that this same monk had carried out, and with vast if not equal

earnestness, his protest against the political as well as the theological heresies of the Roman See. Each of the Electors had carried with him to the Diet a copy of the Appeal which Luther had published and distributed "*To the Emperor and the German Nobility*;" and this had caused him to run over its contents.

It was, therefore, next to impossible but that his Majesty should, in spite of his religious prejudices, look with favour (covert, though circumstances might make it) upon one who challenged independence for his own imperial sceptre, and self-responsibility for himself in union with his own domains; who hurled bitter anathemas, and in the pure spirit of a lofty patriotism, against the arrogance of that Papal pride which had made his ancestors bow the knee to the fisherman at Rome, which presumed to hold even the highest earthly dynasties within its grasp and at its disposal, and was, at the same moment, expecting vassalage from himself as the condition on which he should hold his crown.

Young though was the Emperor Charles V., he saw all this, and he estimated it. And, though he apparently lent himself to the priesthood that surrounded him, and, for reasons politic, sanctioned their intrigues and chicaneries against his bold and uncompromising subject, there is every reason to believe that he willingly connived at any and every effort which the Reformer's friends made on his behalf.

But nevertheless the Emperor believed that policy

required a decree, by which he cut off Martin Luther from the "bed and board" that any of his subjects might be disposed to tender him.

He was an exile from all human sympathies, in so far as the monarch's final edict was concerned, when he arrived at Eisenach! and yet this great ruler, Charles V., had allowed him to gain as far even as Eisenach from beyond his reach!

Then again there were the Electors, and to speak of none others, Frederick the Wise was not merely, like his Imperial Suzerain, in compromised allowance of Doctor Martin Luther, but, specially as the result of the Reformer's conduct at the Diet, his cautious heart became warmly enlisted on Luther's behalf.

"The Father, Doctor Martin, hath spoken well in Latin and in German," said the Elector to his secretary, when Luther left the Senate: "it was a bold step he took. Were it in my power, I would gladly procure justice for him."

"Your Highness can hold him as your prisoner," returned Spalatin, with unwonted boldness.

"Then take all measures you deem right, but let me know none of them," returned the Prince.

Meanwhile, the whole town of Worms was in a state of excitement, that might be called frantic. As Martin Luther was retiring from the Diet, accompanied by Spanish soldiers for his escort, it was bruited among the assembled myriads that he was being led to prison, and they knew well that the prison bolted by priests

of Rome was, and ever had been, the chamber of death.

Then arose a terrific tumult, the object of which was to rescue Luther; but Luther pacified the mob by assurances of his safety, and his conductors, unmolested, saw him safe within his chambers.

Luther had not long gained his rooms, and had scarcely thrown himself upon his pallet, worn out, strong though he was, by the incessant and insidiously contrived demands that had been made upon his exertion, the perspiration still rolling down his face, and that face miserably haggard—when he rose up again, and with an agility that surprised all who were about him, and who were most anxious gazers upon their great friend and master.

The cause of this his sudden resuscitation was this:—

The poor fool, as he appeared to be—that very one who, as we have seen already, had so ominously accosted Martin Luther at the gates of Worms—approached him.

“Reverend Father,” said the jester, “the barbers and the knights are at ill feud.”

“The razor against the sword!” returned Luther, willing to humour the mountebank, not merely out of courtesy to him and to his class, but with a sagacious purpose to seek a double meaning beneath the enigma of the jester.

“There are four hundred scabbards empty, and their

swords are waiting to find out whether they or the razor can cut the deepest," whispered the jester to Father Martin.

"I understand—I understand," returned Luther, in a whisper, also; "but," he added, "why come to *me*, my son? Why thus mix up thy fortunes with poor mine?"

"Father," exclaimed the jester, first looking around him to see if any one could be within shot of hearing—"Father, did I not humbly ask you, days ago, if Folly and Wisdom were not twin sisters? I am Folly, and I seek my sister: in a sad scrape is she, from her love of me; she has sought to meet me, should I not try to go and midway meet her?"

"I understand—I understand," answered Luther, cheerily. "And now, dear sister Folly, what wouldst thou counsel unto Wisdom"—(and he laughed) "unto me, the graver of our mother's twins?"

"I should counsel my dear sister," returned the jester, with mock gravity, "to be off. Does she need her tonsure to be renewed?"

Enigmatical though all this sounds to us, it was full of distinct, plain meaning to Martin Luther; for he learned, thencefrom, what was a fact, that four hundred swords had been drawn for his protection against the persecuting spirit of the Romish priesthood.

Knights of the Empire—men called worldly-minded and dealt harshly with by the then ministers of religion—so revered religion and its rights, that they

drew forth their weapons to vindicate the freedom of God's children ! One of the many instances in the history of truth, that the laity have been the guardians of our faith ! May it be so again, and soon !

CHAPTER XXII.

LATE in the afternoon of a bright and warm May day, in the year of our Lord 1521, a party of travellers, only three in number, were seated on the roots of a wide-spreading beech-tree, regaling themselves with the clear, pure water that gushed forth from an adjoining spring; and, as they talked together, many a sally of mirth awoke loud and hearty laughter from the little group. And yet, in spite of that contagious merriment, one of them no sooner smiled or laughed at a repartee, than his face became blank; and, though the very solitude of the spot (for it was in the bosom of the Thuringian forest) might have been expected to calm down whatsoever anxieties he had been feeling, and though the lustrous leaves and the sunny glade around and before him, united with the bird-carols that met his ear, ought to have induced a calm, joyous radiance upon his features, yet those features were pale and disturbed. His eye, too, roved restlessly, staying never except when it reached some open points in the wood that engirdled both himself and his companions.

"Why, dear brother," exclaimed the elder and the most gladsome of the three, "thy countenance is as care-worn, and as saturnine, as when thou wast standing by my side before the Emperor at the Diet. Why so gloomy, good Amsdorff?"

"I liked not the appearance of those horsemen we saw at Altenstein, Doctor Martin. Mayhap, to tarry thus will be your ruin," replied Amsdorff.

"Then let us start," returned Luther. "If the devil's pointers will pursue me 'as a partridge on the mountains,' they shall find I alight but seldom and but briefly. Pray yoke our poor steed, good Jonas."

The little party of whom we have been speaking, was composed of none others than the great Reformer himself, his faithful and pertinacious friend, Amsdorff, and Luther's own brother, Jonas. At Eisenach, this fugitive from the enmity of the Papal emissaries had dismissed all his other companions, for the sake of secrecy and expedition.

In their flight, which every moment became more perilous, they had diverged off from the public road, and were now, with uneasy uncertainty as to the route, threading their way through thickets, known to but few save the hunter and the bandit; when the crash of horses' hoofs arrested their attention.

"Hist! hist!" cried Jonas, pulling in the horses that were drawing the waggon, of which he had made himself the charioteer. "Hist! hist!"

"Drive on, good Jonas," answered Luther, with

imperturbable calmness; "it is only the wild huntsman: thou hearest no human voices, dost thou?"

This, however, was but an innocent feint to keep up the courage of his frightened relative. And that feint was most inaptly chosen; for, coward as Jonas was, his heart would have more sternly met a dozen men of flesh and sinews rather than the weird spirit of a German hunting-ground.

Not a second passed ere he had leaped from his seat, and plunging into the adjoining bush wood, he scrambled through it, never looking back on his road to Walterhausen.

Not a second more and the humble carriage was beset by no spirit-like huntsman, but by steel-clad knights. And yet not a word was spoken! No one war-word, no one bandit-curse did those knights utter.

Somewhat rudely Amsdorff was dragged away to a distance from the carriage, and Martin Luther, who had been in hourly expectation of being overtaken and seized, now found himself a prisoner!

Without a word, and their very silence was stern and ominous, over his black cassock they threw a military cloak. They place a steel morion upon his shaven crown. They hurry him to mount a led horse which they had brought with them, and then on and

" Onward, through its beechen wilds, and woods,
Plunge the masked riders, with a trackless speed."*

Very long and most road-wearying to the peaceful

* Note 16.

and the unwarlike monk, was the rude and rapid journey that then followed.

What were his thoughts? In no spirit of bravado (bravado had no place in Luther's courageous bosom) he had often before avowed his readiness for death, should Almighty God allot such a seal to His servant's testimony. Wherefore we may feel well assured, that during those dark and mysterious hours his mind was in such peace that he could calmly speculate about the character and purpose of his capture.

"Can it be a friendly one?" he asked himself.

And he had grounds, though slight ones, for indulging such a hopeful question; for, on his leaving Worms, hints had been conveyed to him how many a noble was on the alert for his protection. Nay more, whilst the two leading knights who had seized him were somewhat roughly clothing him in his disguise, a younger man (an esquire in appearance) pressed his hand, and the touch, as if masonic, gave him more than a momentary assurance.

"And yet," he again bethought himself, "were this my capture a friendly one, would there be such grim silence? Surely, seeing how faint and weary this rude travel makes me, friends would at least whisper something of encouragement!"

He had, as well as Amsdorff, noticed a small troop of horsemen hovering about Altenstein, and he had thought he could discern among them the liveries of Duke George, his fiercest and most deeply-pledged enemy.

“Can these be the men of that Dresden swine?” he again soliloquized: “and, mayhap, the poor jester just now gave my hand that pressure.”

Thus debateful and—notwithstanding his cheerful preparedness for the dungeon, the scaffold, or the stake—filled with the awe which the possibilities of an approaching death must give to every thoughtful spirit, however brave; glancing with disinterested fear at the perils which the Truth of God might have to undergo, should his career be thus summarily cut short; his attention to the world within him was at length broken off by a change in the aspect of the world without him.

The cavalcade had drawn rein. At first Luther, without looking about him—thought that the blown horses, whose deep breathings he could hear, required rest, and that such was the only reason for their halting. But his eyes, as he gradually raised them, soon detected another reason. Right before him he saw a lofty, conical hill, from the summit of which peered a castle, now sharply defined in its outlines from its having a bright, crescent moon in the back ground, while the face of the hill on which it stood, remained in the darkest and most forbidding gloom.

It was in order to recover breath for the ascent, that the troop was stopping.

Luther, at a glance, knew where he was. Before him was that very castle of the Wartburg, to the base of which he had so often, in former days, clamored.

The cavalcade again moves on, the noble steeds pant and foam as they breast the precipice; the leader of the party has gained the rude, lone fortress, and the sounds of his bugle-summons recoil back, and the echoes of the mountain gloomily reverberate during the stilly night. The warder withdraws the bolts, and the drawbridge falls, and soon Martin Luther finds himself within an iron-guarded chamber, and to his grateful astonishment, in the presence of captors, whom, they having now unmasked themselves, he recognizes as his fast friends, Burcard Von Hund, Hans Von Berletsch,* and the young Lord Rupert also.†

* Or Berlepst. Vide d'Aubigne, p. 284.

† See Michelet, p. 97.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE Wartburg, to which, with such apparent rudeness, but with the kindest intentions, Martin Luther had been conducted, was a lonely mountain fortress surrounded, on all sides, by the dark forests of Thuringia. It is still standing, not in ruins, though partially dismantled. The access to it is long and precipitous, just as were most of the approaches to our mediæval castles. You ascend by a road very serpentine, and begirt by tall trees or dense thickets, and the garniture of the entire mountain, on the top of which it stands, is that of universal foliage. Looking forth from the window of Luther's chamber, you descry numerous ravines, almost barren ones, which, however, are saved from an aspect of coldness by the rich loamy soil which covers them, as well as by the blushing, though bare, cliffs that overhang them. There is no neighbouring castle or homestead within sight. Far different from many another donjon, it commands the sight of no broad river, the glorious Rhine for instance, on which a captive's eyes might dilate with joy, albeit provoked to bitterness, as he watched the freedom of its meanderings,

and caught the carols and sympathized with the struggles of its boatmen. At the Wartburg all is stillness, stillness to the eye and stillness to the ear, save when the voice of God is among the trees, or the glances of God's eye are seen in the lightning upon the opposite mountain scarps. You can see, from Luther's window, no open sunny glades in which the deer, as they browsed or ruminated, might call away from himself a sad prisoner's thoughts. Sometimes, but not often, a wheeling vulture may break the inanimateness of the scene; but that bird, so isolated in life and passion, only lends dreariness to the view.

It was some days and nights after his captivity before Martin Luther could realize the quietude around him. His eye could not immediately throw off the reflection of the pomp and glare of the Imperial Diet; neither could his ear dismiss those sounds, either military or disputations, by which it had been dinned; nor could his heart's pulsations subside quickly—those pulsations of natural awe, and of personal anxiety, and of Christian obligation, which had been beating so strongly within his bosom as he confronted the presence of the Cæsar, offered himself up to martyrdom, and assumed the functions and responsibilities of a confessor of a Faith that was still in the infancy and helplessness of a recent resurrection.

We say, it took some days and nights before he could realize the quietude around him. It took some days and nights before his feverish and excited spirit could hear silence. This arose solely from that condi-

tion, or law of emotion, to which all men's feelings must be subjected. For, the moment he entered his chamber, the companions who were around him were guarantees to the friendliness and the security of his captivity. He knew full well that captors, such as Hans Von Berletsch, and Barcard Von Hund, and Rupert of Arensberg, could have led him not to a prison but a refuge.

The scene upon his arrival within his chamber was very odd; indeed, but that his young escort were on a mission of solemn earnestness and responsibility, they would have laughed at it, right heartily, as ludicrous. Very reverentially, yet firmly, they uncassocked the great Monk. In the stead of his ancient serge waiscoat they placed a corslet upon his breast, and tied its thongs upon his back behind him. Over his shoulders they threw, in place of his professor's gown, the pallium of the soldier. They made him assume the military high boots. They stole away his plain, black ecclesiastical cap, and surmounted his shaven crown with another, far more warlike and ostentatious. The ruffled brow of Martin Luther had to bear the shadows of a waving feather.

"We bid you welcome, Father Martin, to our poor castle," said Von Berletsch, as soon as this transformation of Luther's person was completed. Hans Von Berletsch was the Chatelain of the Wartburg, and, therefore, was warranted in thus addressing his illustrious guest.

"But what mean you, my merry men," exclaimed

Luther, laughing, "by this odd, this fun-loving metamorphosis you have made of me? Who will teach me how to step out with these seven-leagued boots? Why, I have ever felt it to be hard work to bind on a sandal! And as to this buckler, do ye know and understand, my men, that I want no human shield."

Then, with a sudden change of both voice and manner, he continued, and in a very different tone, "Are not my feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace? Do you wish me to barter for your leathern target the shield of faith? Am I, think you, such a fool as to barter God's helmet and the Spirit's sword, for the miserable head-piece or falchion of an armourer? I will have none, and I assure you stoutly, of these wretched, low, these God-dishonouring defences; remove them each and all, as you love me, my Lord Rupert. Let the Devil and the Pope find me, if they wish to find me, clothed only in the righteousness of Christ."

"Squire George,"* returned Rupert, "we are but doing what our Sovereign has commanded."

"Then render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," returned the Reformer with a sudden placidness.

Thus far assured of the honourable and considerate intentions of his captors, Martin Luther retired to rest, and slept soundly. But his feelings on awakening in the morning were most painful. His first thought, at that moment, was to spring from his couch, as he had done on so many mornings at Worms, eager for the

* Note 17.

polemic strife, and resolute to meet the dangers of the ensuing day. These acts of self-bracing had been as pleasurable as they were invigorating. But on this occasion his great spirit had to suffer from a collapse. He no longer heard the clarion that had of late summoned both himself and his mighty judges to the Court; the plaint of the bittern was all that met his ear. As a mere matter of habit, he went to his window and unbarred it, for the purpose of drinking in God's freshest air; but while he quaffed it, though he found it far more pure than aught which he had ever tasted in the Imperial City, he felt depressed; for his eye missed objects, that while they had been full of warning had, nevertheless, been full of stimulation whilst he remained at Worms. He could discern no troops, hastening in martial grandeur, to form an escort to the Cæsar who was judging him. He beheld no procession of the Church, whereamong cardinals, bishops, abbots, priests and monks could be discerned, all preceded by incense-bearers before the Holy Rood, which incense was to have the double purpose of first invoking Christ's mercy upon themselves, and then of invoking death and damnation upon Martin Luther. Neither did there meet his gaze any crowds of honest Teuton laymen, who, at Worms, had thronged around his door, even from the vesper to the matin hour, in order to be his shield and buckler. There were no glances from his beloved Melancthon, or from Cruciger, to which he could respond.

Luther shuddered as he felt thus alone *without anything to do or suffer*.

Several days transpired while he was undergoing this re-action, without his receiving any relief save that of the considerate tendance of the chatelain of the castle.

But his elasticity of soul would re-assert itself.

"Think you Luther is dead?" he would demand often, as he stalked up and down his chamber, as a lion chafed by the confinement of his den. "No! no! Luther is not dead: he lives and is ready to begin a game that nobody as yet expects. Be ye warned, ye men of Belial, or I shall take matters actively in hand—I, a man of faith and of eternity!"

Then, this outburst having spent itself, he sat him down before a table upon which several of his favourite books had been piled, by his thoughtful friends; but the cold reluctancy with which he turned the leaves of his Hebrew Psalter, of his Greek Testament, of his finger-worn copy of St. Augustine, showed how mightily the re-action had come again.

Thus moodily or petulantly did he pass many a day.

"Here have I been eight days without praying, without studying: whether from temptations of the flesh, or from some other vexations that are upon me, I know not," he murmured out, on this the eighth day of his imprisonment: "I will write and say so to Philip."

He sat down to the little chestnut-wood table which

was in the centre of his chamber and began to write. Soon, however, this his plaintive petulancy was agreeably interrupted. In there came, and with but scant ceremony, the servants of the castle, who, while Luther sat wondering or indignant, as the service was being performed, laid covers for numerous guests, flanking each plate with a bottle of the best and costliest Rhenish wine.

"I have presumed to invite some friends to sup with me, 'Squire George," said the Chatelain, Von Berletsch, as he entered soon after. "You must be moody, cooped up here, as you are, in this dove-cot, and I have bethought me that you might give a glad welcome to men who can do better than I can to laugh away a sorrow."

What was Martin Luther's astonishment and joy as he descried, behind his kind host, some dear friends whom he had but lately parted from! The fact was, the kind Chatelain, anxious both to relieve the tedium of Luther's solitude, and also to quiet the alarms of his followers for his safety, had sent for some of them, having arranged that for the sake of secrecy they should arrive in the evening and remain until the following nightfall.

"Ah! this is indeed kind of you, Von Berletsch," exclaimed Luther. "You have brought me friends who love at all times. Brethren who are born for adversity."

Then followed an hour of confidential intercourse, whence Luther learned that scarcely had he turned

his back on Worms, before the Emperor published a severe edict, prohibiting all his subjects, upon penalty of high treason, from affording to Luther any aid or asylum; commanding every one to watch for and to seize him and place him in safe custody until justice should decide upon his destiny; moreover, ordering that all his writings, whether in Latin or in German, should be burned; and that all the Emperor's subjects should give aid and assistance to the Apostolic Commissioners who were entrusted with carrying into effect the decrees of the Holy See. It menaced with the severest penalties all booksellers and printers who should publish or sell any of the monk's writings, or should dare, in any manner, to circulate any publications calculated to bring into contempt the Sovereign Pontiff, the Roman Church Prelates, Princes, or the Universities. It ordered that wheresoever any such publication, of whatever kind, image, engraving, or printed book, should be found, it should forthwith be torn or broken up, and burned, and its authors and publisher severely punished according to the laws. And it concluded thus:—In order that similar attacks upon religion, the Holy See, the Church and Dignitaries, may not recur, the edict orders that, in future, no work treating of religious matters shall be published until it shall have been subjected to the examination of the ordinary, or of the faculty of theology of the nearest university.*

“A fine thing, truly!” exclaimed Luther, when his friends had finished. “A fine thing, truly! The

* Audin.

young Emperor—no ! not the Emperor, but his accursed councillors, would burn me, and burn my books, would they ? Then do you, my brethren, bear back to him, and to them, this my defiance : ‘ Come on, swine that you are ! burn me if your dare ! I am here to be seized upon. My ashes shall pursue you after my death, though you throw them all to the winds, into all the seas. Living, I shall be the enemy of Popery ; dead, I shall be doubly its enemy ! ’ ”

Though it increased but gradually, the vehemence with which Luther closed this defiance, alarmed both his fellow-guests and their host, Von Berletsch.

“ To whom, dear and reverend Father ? ” asked one of the foremost of his friends. “ To whom would you have us bear a message so defiant and, may I humbly say, so full of a challenge that may prove perilous to both yourself and our cause ? ”

“ Unless you cry craven in Christ’s battle, bear it, my brother, to the very beard of the Emperor himself,” returned Luther, sternly. “ Say to them from me, ‘ Do what you can, Luther will be the bear in your path, the lion in your way ; he will pursue you where-soever you go, he will present himself incessantly before you, will leave you not a moment’s peace or truce, till he has broken your iron head and your brazen front—for your salvation or your damnation, as you shall then act.’ ”

“ And this to our Lord the Emperor ? ” cried numerous voices.

“ Nay—nay, not the Emperor, as if uttered to him-

self!" returned Luther, smiling at the pale and anxious countenances of the questioners. "Not to the Emperor—all honour be to him to whom honour is due. But," continued he, "tell those swine, for swine they are, loving the laziness and the grossness of the swinehood—tell them that to the words of fathers, of men, of angels, of devils, I oppose, not the old customs, nor the multitude of men, but the word of Eternal Majesty—that gospel which my adversaries are compelled to recognize. There I take my stand—there I take my seat—there I take my resting-place—there is my triumph—there my glory; from thence I defy Popes, Thomists, Henricists, Sophists, and the gates of Hell!"

No one of Luther's auditors returned a syllable of either sympathy or disallowance. It was obvious to each and all of them, that their revered master and teacher was, for a while, forgetting, amid his passions of indignation, those purposes which the commonest prudence would dictate.

They were all silent and thoughtful, and Luther himself was disturbed by their very quietude.

At length he broke that silence, saying, "We all need rest and sleep, my brethren. Meet me on the morrow's morn at the chapel of this my prison, and then I will preach unto you God's word; and, thenceforth, you must, as you list, obey."

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON the summit of the Wartburg the dawn was near an hour earlier than at Eisenach, which was situated at its base. Notwithstanding, the anxious friends of Martin Luther had anticipated the summons of the matin bell, and were all convened and wakeful before he made his appearance.

The chapelry had been quickly made out of one of the halls of the castle. Only one temporary and rude desk was placed for the priest, and all this, its novelty, was increased when that priest entered. Father Martin Luther, instead of wearing his shaven crown, had allowed the hair of his head and beard to grow luxuriantly. His cassock and surplice, and other monastic habiliments, had been exchanged for the steel cuirass, the long heavy sword, the plumed casque, the spurs and boots of the man-at-arms.* So that, sooth to say, in spite of the devotional conditions of that moment, when his audience were prepared for all solemnity of feeling, by the circumstances and perils of their meeting, and by their personal reverence for the great

* Audin.

confessor of their faith, every one of them felt it to be an effort properly to compose himself.

However, this sense of the strange incongruity in both the furniture of the transient church and the costume of the minister soon faded before the gravity and the earnestness of Martin Luther: first, as he preferred to Almighty God several of the most awe-inspiring Collects of the Church Catholic: and then, when he began to address themselves.

That audience was such an one as has seldom been brought together. There one might have seen knights and esquires, famed for their rank and for their warlike prowess. Also, intermingling with them, and in contrast to their burnished mail and the glittering scabbards of their swords, one might have seen men dressed, either in black serge as ecclesiastics, or in sober russet-brown as burghers. And, in addition to that natural collectedness of feature which is imposed by the bare act of worshipping the Eternal, one might have seen an uncustomary look of determination, as if they anticipated from the preacher some stern practical resolve.

Martin Luther, as we have mentioned already, had been betrayed into unduly impassioned language on the night before. His keen eye had detected the painful impression which that language had then made upon his hearers; and, while he lay upon his couch and pondered over it, he had mourned before God on account of his impetuosity.

Nevertheless, deeply humbled though he felt when

in the silence of the night he found himself alone with the Author of all truth and charity, he could not recognize the fitness of being as lowly in his admissions before men.

“You ask me,” he demanded of his audience—“you ask me to be gentler in my language, to exercise a greater restraint upon my tongue: I perfectly understand what you mean. But is there anything in common between the Christian and the hypocrite? The Christian faith is an open, a public, a sincere faith; it sees things as they really are, it proclaims them to be what they really are. My opinion is, that we ought to unmask all hypocrites and ill-doers; that we ought to spare none of them, to excuse none of them, to shut our eyes to none of their proceedings, so that truth may remain free and manifest, as on a broad, open field. ‘*Cursed be he that doeth the Lord’s work deceitfully,*’ says Jeremiah. It is one thing to praise or extenuate vice, and another to set about its cure with kindness and gentleness. Before all things it is essential to declare, aloud and unequivocally, what is just and what is unjust; afterwards, when our hearer is thoroughly imbued with that lesson, we should soothe him and assist him, despite of—nay all the more for—any weaknesses whereunto he may fall back. ‘*Brethren, comfort ye the feeble-minded,*’ says St. Paul. I trust that no one will ever have cause to charge me with any want of charity or patience towards the feeble-minded.”

Whilst he was uttering these half-quieting, half-

exciting words, the Reformer was watching their influence upon his hearers. In his doing so, it must be recollected that his position and official object were far removed above those of an ordinary orator, who while he is framing his sentences, and adapting to each of them its appropriate cadence, looks around him with the purpose of ascertaining whether there follows either listlessness or applause. His eyes roved in no quest of admiration, neither in any fear of contradiction. What he spoke he believed and he felt to be the truth; yet, though caring but little as to what consequences might follow, he watched every movement among his audience.

Each of those movements stirred him up to an increasing passionateness; for the mailed men-at-arms shook themselves, as if preparing for a combat, although the words of the speaker who addressed them had been conciliatory. Likewise even the murmurs of the listening burghers were in defiance of not himself, but of his foes.

The preacher caught the infection:—

“I really ought,” Luther resumed, “in justice to myself, to address you in far harsher language. My love is ready to die for you; but touch my faith, and you touch the apple of my eye. Jest at, or honour the love, as you think fit; but the faith, the Word, this you should adore, this you should look upon as the Holy of Holies. I pray you earnestly to do so. Ask anything of our love; but fear, dread our faith.

“ Poor, lost brother that I am ! here have I lighted up another great flame ; here have I again lit another great hole in the Papists’ pockets. What will be become of me by-and-by ? Whence will the Romans collect together enough sulphur, pitch, and firewood, to burn the poisonous heretic ? ‘ Kill ! kill ! ’ cry they—‘ kill that heresiarch who seeks to overthrow the whole Church, who seeks to rouse all Christendom against us ! ’ I hope, that in due season, if I be only worthy of such an end, I may attain it, and that in me these men may fulfil the measure of their anger ; but it is not yet time—my hour has not yet come. I have first to make this race of vipers still more furious against me, and thoroughly to earn the death they desire to inflict upon me.”*

However, after this ebullition of what was too personal in feeling, Martin Luther’s more Christian emotions came to check him with their mildness.

“ But let me close this my brief address to you, my brethren,” he added, after a long pause, “ and they shall be in the words I have, only a day ago, received from the Cardinal Archbishop of Mayence. His highness has written these very words himself. God help me honestly to adopt them on my own account ! ‘ I acknowledge fully that I have great need of the assistance of God, poor, weak sinner that I am, sinning each day of my life, and wandering aside from the right path. Well do I know that without God’s help I can do nothing, vile dust of the earth that I am. ’ ”

* Luther’s Werke, 113.

Adding but a few more sentences, much to the same purport as the above, the great preacher closed his sermon with the words:—

“Think not, however, that the days—aye, nights—of my seclusion, be they few or many, will be thrown away. The hearts of our dear Germans have been quickened to a desire for God’s Word, and, Christ helping me, they shall have their desire. They shall have it so that each man in his own tongue may read the wonderful works of God. And then, though Luther dies, or is kept dumb, the Word that liveth and abideth for ever shall take root among you. Oh! how great and glorious a thing it will be for you to have that Word! You may then at all times feel joyous and secure. You need never be in want of consolation, for you shall see in all its brightness the pure and right way. Ever mark the great difference between its voice and the voice of man. Martin Luther’s word is a little sound, that flies into the air, and soon vanishes; but the Word of God is greater than heaven and earth, yea, greater than death and hell.”

“And now, dear faithful brethren, we must separate. On your return to your homes at nightfall (and for the sake of secrecy you must not leave the castle until then) you will, I am sure, divulge nothing of our meeting. Cost us what it may, believe me, my present refuge must remain unknown.”

Long after that Martin Luther had taken leave of them, and had retired to his chamber, his fast friends remained together in earnest conclave. And as the

result of the mutual vows of maintaining silence as to his place of retreat, the Reformer lived at the Wartburg for the space of ten months, during all which time his enemies were at fault, and the greater number of his friends in alarm, if not despair, respecting him.

He had been carried thither by earnest and anxious friends. No one besides themselves, not even his great patron the Elector Frederick, knew of the place of his retreat. Indeed, by the whole German people his disappearance was interpreted into his death. Whilst he was reinvigorating his forces for future action, and preparing that vernacular translation of God's will and truth, which was to form the indestructible basis of the Reformation, the Papists were wild with joy, overflowing in their comments upon the Divine judgments that, so they thought, had overtaken the blaspheming Monk. On the other hand, his disciples, who mourned and wept as having lost more than a father, were taught by stern discipline how essential for his great work God had made him, and were prepared by the ordeal of their helplessness to welcome and to value the second Apocalypse which at last came from a second Patmos; for, from the castle of the Wartburg sounded forth that Revelation of the Most High which the Roman priesthood had for centuries paralyzed into dumbness, and thus that remote fortress became—and is still in the mind of all Biblical Christendom—a spot which holds no slight analogy with the solitary isle on which the beloved Apostle had been confined.

Nothing could disturb Luther's indefatigable industry during this his enforced retirement. It mattered not that he was suffering from a melancholy of spirits, which, as he himself often said, was hideous; or that he was rent and torn by the ill-omened news, which reached him from his beloved Wittemberg, of the insane excesses of "false brethren"; onward he pursued his studies with indomitable perseverance. By stern application he completed his mastery of the Greek and Hebrew languages; translated from the Latin and added notes to the Apology of Melancthon against the theologians of the Sorbonne; and commenced his own immortal version of the Bible.

"I have published," he writes on the 1st November, the seventh month of his captivity, "a little volume against that of Catharinus on Antichrist; a treatise in German on Confession; a Commentary, in German, on the 67th Psalm; another, also in German, on the Canticle of Mary; a third on the 37th Psalm; and a Consolation to the Church of Wittemberg. Moreover, I have in the press a commentary, in German, on the Epistles and Gospels for the year. I have just sent off a public reprimand to the Bishop of Mayence, on the idol of indulgences he has raised up again at Halle, and I have finished a Commentary on the Gospel story of the Ten Lepers. All these writings are in German. I was born for the good of my dear Germans, and I will never cease to serve them."

But this retired course of life was soon to suffer from a rude violence that came from the most unexpected

quarter. Among the many rash and untamed spirits, to whom the polemics of those days had given pre-eminence, Carlstadt stood supreme. Borne along by the fiercest zealotry, and, perhaps, by an unworthy ambition to eclipse Martin Luther, he seized upon the occasion of the latter's enforced absence, and charged him with indifference to the true spirituality of Christian worship, solely because the great Reformer had maintained all earnestness, whilst he disowned all fanaticism.

Carlstadt daily assembled crowds of persons of the lower class, and stormed them with his own iconoclastic fury. Martin Luther heard, from his retreat, that on one occasion the mob, excited to madness by his designing colleague, had burst into the Church of All Saints at Wittenberg, and there—in irreverent neglect of the divine service which was going on—had committed the most daring outrages upon the statues, the paintings, and other furniture of the consecrated building. In other churches mock trials of their sacred decorations were indecently instituted and as indecently sustained; so that what with the insult thus gratuitously inflicted upon the feelings and prejudices of the Roman Catholic population, and what with the injuries done to calm truth by the wild vociferations of the demagogues, the cause of the Reformation was placed in the utmost peril.

How far Luther was from sympathizing with such extravagances may be learned from his own words on these sad occasions :—

“I,” said he in a letter to Melancthon—“I condemn only by the Word: let him who believes, believe and follow me; let him who believes not, believe not and go his own way in peace. No one must be compelled to the faith or to the things of the faith against his will; he must be prevailed upon by faith alone. I also condemn images, but I would have them assailed by the Word, and not by blows and fire; I would deal with them so that the people should no longer have faith in them which they have heretofore had; to effect this great object, must be the work of the Word, and not of violence. Be assured, the images will fall of themselves, when the people, becoming enlightened, shall know that they are as nothing in the eyes of God; it is in this way I would efface from men’s consciences, by the power of the Word alone, all these devices of the Pope as to confession, communion, prayer, and fasting.”

But no letter could allay the religious extravagances of the populace. And, therefore, Luther, though in disobedience of the commands of the good Elector, resolved to brave all personal dangers, and leaving the security of the Wartburg, repaired to Wittenberg.*

CHAPTER XXV.

IN former pages we have not hesitated to record those traits of severe, hard-featured character which, it must be confessed, were to be found in Martin Luther. But it should not be overlooked that they more especially disclosed themselves at his outset in the work of Reformation, and became less and less apparent as that work assumed shape and symmetry. In this there was a moral fitness. At the commencement of his sublime mission he had to dash in fragments the mighty masonry of ages, and for that he needed a rough Cyclopean hand. Afterwards, however, as he was called to erect another and a purer structure, and to employ deliberate thought in the selection and adjustment of materials, a milder order of faculties was requisite. The roar of explosive blastings was to give way to the sound of less grating implements.

At the period to which we have now arrived, this interesting transition began. Worn out, and half-deafened amid the smoke and dust of the crumbling fabric of the Papacy, he had been borne off, by

friendly hands, to the quiet and pure atmosphere of the Wartburg, and there during nearly a twelvemonth his fermented emotions were subsiding into gentleness. Through what reactionary stages of depression he then passed we have seen already. They must have been terrific ones, to extort from such a soul as his the language, "Sitting at night in my apartment, I uttered cries like a woman in travail." And again, "Oh, my friends, do you then forget to pray for me, that God can thus leave me to myself?"

The results of such softening influences were immediately apparent both in his private intercourse and his public actions, when he arrived at Wittemberg. Not losing a moment, he repaired to the house of his disciple and fast friend, Jerome Schurff, where, to his exquisite delight, he found Melancthon, Jonas, Amsdorff, and Augustine Schurff, Jerome's brother, assembled. These had been the leaders of the little faithful band which, during Doctor Martin's absence, had sustained both his principles of faith and his views of toleration, against the assaults of the Romanists on the one hand, and the misguided bigotry of Carlstadt and his followers on the other. They were now convened in Jerome Schurff's house, drawn thither by a common anxiety: for the news had been circulated amongst them that Luther was on his road to Wittemberg; that he had despatched a letter to the Elector, to apprize him of the reasons of his leaving the Wartburg without authority; and that the Elector had despatched Schurff to meet him, to remonstrate with

him upon his movement, and to urge his return back to his refuge.

They were in the midst of earnest conversation, each one uttering his own speculations: some timid, others hopeful, as to the consequences, should Luther persist in his intentions. As the Reformer was in the act of opening the door of the chamber, where they were assembled, the words—from a well-known voice—fell upon his ear—

“ I would rather die than be separated from him ! ”

“ Ah ! sayest thou so, my beloved Melancthon ? ” exclaimed Luther, as he burst suddenly into the room. “ Then, even in death we will not be divided ! ”

There was nothing of strained language in either of the speakers. Very different were they from each other ; Philip Melancthon’s gentleness, and caution, and classical taste, and habits of logical refining, standing out in singular contrast to the energy, the impetuosity, and the bold and rugged theologism of Martin Luther. Yet their mutual love passed the love of brothers. Each admired those qualities in which he knew himself to be deficient. Each loved, and with equal intenseness, that holy cause to which they had been consecrated ; and rejoiced in knowing how his peculiarities were supplemented by those of his friend, and how, thus, their combination would give effect to the enterprise so dear to both.

“ And what may have been that topic before the council, which called forth such loving words from our dearest Philip ? Tell me ! ” said Luther, looking

towards Amsdorff, so soon as all had exchanged greetings with their long-lost master.

“The topic,” returned Amsdorff, “was the one which for many a sad month hath been uppermost in all our thoughts—it was yourself.”

“No; not the uppermost in your thoughts,” said Luther gravely. “God forbid that your love to a poor, weak, sinful man should place him uppermost!”

“What should we do without our father?” murmured Augustine Schurff.

“Oh, grieve me not—above all, grieve not God’s Spirit, good Augustine!” said Luther, with startling earnestness. “What should you do? And have *you*,” he continued, looking round upon them—“have *you* thus far sinned as to think that any instrument, much less such a wretched tool as I am, was indispensable to God? Mark it well, dear brethren, when I tell you—this city Wittenberg is sinking fast into licentiousness; the holy law of faith in Christ is being made the warrant for unrighteousness; our good is being evil spoken of; the single power of Truth hath been replaced by fanatic force; the glory of our meek and lowly Christ Jesus is fading away amid the flames of a lurid bigotry; and wot ye not all this may have been allowed to happen in punishment for your leaning upon an arm of flesh? And God knows how often, while in my solitude, I have trembled at fear of this; and how often, in deep abasement before the Eternal, I have implored Him, should anything impure have mingled in our

doing of His work, to remember that I am but a sinful man !

“ But tell me, and without reserve, the exact state of my poor flock here ! ” he resumed, after a few moments’ pause. “ Are they not my own sheep ? Has not God committed them to my care ? And ought I not, if need be, to lay down my life for them ? ”

“ The wolf hath never ceased to prowl around the fold. That was to have been expected. But, alas ! alas ! they must be hirelings who, having scaled the palisades, are now spreading nought but fright and recklessness among your sheep,” returned Melancthon sadly.

“ Tell me all ; and tell me plainly, Melancthon,” said Luther.

“ Some of your once faithful people have been seduced by self-called prophets, to renounce that doctrine for which you, Reverend Father, have ever so strenuously and so wisely contended. Self-illumined seers from Zwickau have brought them to believe that each man’s conceited possession of the Holy Spirit is to interpret, or to modify, or to supersede—as best it may—the express letter of God’s Scriptures.”

“ And what doth their spirit speak ? ” asked Luther grimly.

“ That the earth must be, and will soon be, purified by blood ; and that then supreme power shall be given to one Nicolas Sturch, their wretched leader, who

shall install the saints in the government of the world," returned Melancthon.

"Poor, poor fools!" sighed Luther.

"And, further, Reverend Father," Melancthon added, "they declare infant baptism to be of no avail, and these prophets insist upon another baptism as the only true access to the true Church of God. But as to this, in error though they are in their self-assumptions, perhaps there may be some particles of Holy Truth in this their dogma."

"Still again at thy refining cautions, art thou, Philip? But away with them for the moment! Have these great founders of their new saintly government as yet resisted unto blood? Have they, or have they not?" demanded Luther.

"They have provoked violence, and so the civic peace of Wittenberg has been placed in peril," interrupted Amsdorff.

"Yet, have they drawn the sword in offence on those who differ from them?"

"Not as yet."

"Then leave them to their miserable fantasies," said Luther. "Let the bailiffs of the town keep its peace in charge. We must meddle with them with other weapons. It is with *the Word* we must contend, and by *the Word* we must refute and expel what has gained a footing by violence. I would not resort to force against such as are superstitious; nor even against unbelievers! Let there be no compulsion: liberty is the very essence of faith!"

And right nobly did this great Reformer exemplify his confidence in the truth and sufficiency of these convictions, respecting the duty of Universal Toleration.

It was on Easter Eve, the 9th of March, 1521, that he uttered them in private to his friends. On the morrow morning, he gave to them the utmost publicity before the multitudes that assembled to hear him preach. Probably on no former occasion—not even when before the Diet at Worms—and, probably, on no subsequent occasion in his life, was he called to exert a more self-subjugating resolution. There must have been, still rife within his bosom, the feelings of honest indignation at the unscrupulous violence which the Roman See, under the plea of vindicating truth, had endeavoured to wreak upon his person. He knew, full well, that it was from no fault of hers that his body had not, long ago, been consumed to ashes, and those ashes dissipated by the four winds of Heaven. He knew, full well, that it was from no forbearance of hers that God's Holy Word had not been captured, and placed, under the charge of mischievous revolutionism, within the deepest dungeon of a fortalice inaccessible. And then, as he looked around upon his audience, and discerned the fierce expression of their eyes, and their deep-set teeth—as he beheld partisans and other weapons in their hands, and knew full well, from their recent conduct, how one single word from him would command the direst vengeance upon the very altars and liberties of

his persecuting foes—and as his judgment told him that never before had his personal safety been so critically imperilled—*then* it was, we say, that probably on no occasion throughout his whole life did he exert a more self-subjugating spirit.

Immediately in front of the pulpit, there stood Carlstadt, who, dangerous from his learning, his high position as a professor at the University, and his previous labours with Martin Luther, had gone through the streets of Wittemberg, and cried, “It is become necessary that we should exterminate all the ungodly practices around us. People kneel and crawl before Romish idols, burn tapers before their shrines, and make offerings to them. Let us arise, and drag the worshippers from their altars!” Also there stood among the congregation Gabriel Didymus, and Celarius, both arch-fanatics. Of the remaining human mass, far, by far the greater part was heaving with religious frenzy.

“The hour is arrived, when we must trample under foot the power of Satan, and contend against the spirit of darkness. If our adversaries do not flee from us, Christ will know how to compel them. We who put our trust in the Lord of life and death, are lords both of life and death.”

Such was Martin Luther's exordium.

The grim countenances of the enthusiasts before him, at first relaxed, then beamed with smiles of assent and approbation. Melancthon, and Schurff, and Amsdorff, grew pale, for these words of their revered

teacher seemed to be at such variance with those doctrines of moderation which he had avowed and urged on the former evening.

But wait awhile: be not so soon the sport of your apprehensions, good, gentle friends: Father Martin will not commit either yourselves or the cause of Religious Liberty. Wait awhile, ye well-intentioned but misguided iconoclasts: Martin Luther will furnish you with no warrant for your unseemly bigotry.

One good hour elapsed, however, before either of these parties was thoroughly undeceived — before they learned what the preacher meant, as to the sufficiency of divine truth to propagate and protect itself; they must be taught afresh what that divine truth was: so, with consummate skill, and fidelity withal—without one word that possibly could exasperate the unfriendly portion of his audience—and, notwithstanding that the present function of his eloquence was to soothe down and pacify, rather than excite his hearers—he imperceptibly diverted their thoughts and emotions into holier channels, and then, abreast of the new current, rose to the height of his great argument:—

“Satan!” he exclaimed, “Satan hath attempted to do much mischief here in my fold, in such a way, that it will be difficult to meet the case without offence to both parties; see to it, that no innovation be allowed to be made, either by common consent, or by violence. By the Word alone must error be assaulted, dislodged, overthrown, and done away,

which some of you, my brethren, impelled by Satan, have, in your first zeal, attempted to carry by storm. I condemn, as an abomination, the papal mass, which is made a sacrifice and a good work, whereby a man is restored to favour with God. But I will not, therefore, resort to force, or persuade one who is without faith, much less compel him to do it away with violence; only through the Word will I condemn the abuse of the mass. Whosoever will believe, let him believe, and follow unconstrained; and whosoever will not believe, let him disbelieve and go his way; for no one should be forced to faith, or to anything pertaining to the faith, but should be drawn to it, and won by the Word; then, whosoever believeth without constraint, will freely follow. I also reject the images which men worship; but I do it through the Word, not urging men to burn them up, but, rather, not to put their trust in them, as others have done, and still do. The images will fall of themselves, if the people are instructed through the Word, and learn that they are nothing before God. So, likewise, do I condemn the papal laws about auricular confession, going at stated times to the Holy Sacrament, praying to saints, and fasting; but I do it through the Word, to free the conscience from these shackles. When that is done, then they can either continue to use them, on account of the weak who are still entangled with them, or they do those observances away if others are already strong. Thus Charity may prevail in these outward works and laws.

“Let me repeat,” he continued. “The mass is a bad thing. God is opposed to it. It ought to be abolished, and I would that everywhere the Supper of the Lord were established in its stead. But let none be torn from it by force. We must leave results to God. It is not *we* that must work, but *His Word*. And why so? you will ask. Because the hearts of men are not in my hand, as clay in the hand of the potter. We have a right to preach, but none whatever to compel. Let us preach;—the rest belongs to God. If I resort to force, what shall I gain? Grimace, fair appearances, apings, cramped uniformity, and hypocrisy; but there will be no hearty sincerity, no faith, no love. When these are wanting, all is wanting; and I would not give a straw for such a victory.

“Know you what the devil thinks when he sees men resort to violence to spread the Gospel through the world? Seated behind the fire of hell, and folding his arms, with indignant glance and horrid leer, Satan says, ‘How good it is in yonder madmen to play into my hands!’ But only let him see the Word of the Lord circulating, and working its way unaided on the field of the world, and at once he is disturbed at his work: his knees smite each other, he trembles, and is ready to die with fear.

“Observe the sun. He dispenses two gifts, namely, *light* and *warmth*. The mightiest monarch cannot turn aside his rays;—they come straight on, arriving upon this earth by a direct course. Meanwhile his warmth

goes out and diffuses itself in every direction. So it is that truth, like light, should ever be simple and unbending; whilst love, like warmth, should beam forth on all sides, and bend to every necessity of our brethren."

"Don't you think Luther a wonderful teacher?"

This question was asked of Gabriel Didymus—of him who had been one of the most extravagant in both religious theory and action.

"Ah!" replied he, "I seem to be listening to the voice of an angel rather than of a man."

Carlstadt left the church with an air of melancholy dejection. For months afterwards, he could not even wear a smile. Ultimately, however, he confessed his errors, and resumed, with a more sober spirit, his offices at the university.

For six days more did Luther continue, in manifold expositions of Scripture, to enforce similar truths upon an increasingly congenial auditory. At length the deluded people laid aside their rampant ferocity towards their Roman Catholic brethren. Kindness and forbearance, at least on their part, followed. And, supposing that he could have had any disposition to institute comparisons between himself and former orators, he might have said,—

"Easy enough was it for Demosthenes to take the lead, and then to stimulate to a higher velocity the already prepared impulses of an Athenian people. Savonarola, too, could have found but little difficulty in fanning the already ignited flame of the ardent

Florentines. But this work of mine has been far more desperate. Mine has been, not to add fuel to an already kindled fire, but, without extinguishing it, to become its master, and to direct it for the purposes of civilization and of religion."

All this, and much more, he might have said to himself, at the successful close of his sermons to his recently furious and intractable congregation at Wittenberg. But heavenly mercy saved him from any such self-glorification.

But a few weeks after all this excitement, and all this perilous appeal to his vanity, he calmly took his seat near his friend Melancthon's desk, worked with him at the translation of the Holy Scriptures into honest German, and while his eye lost, for a moment, its serenity in stern indignation at his Papal opponents, who sought to establish what they thought right by force, not by argument, he would often interpose—

"If reason could speak, dear Philip, it would say, Oh, that I could once hear the Word of God! I should think it worth a journey to the very uttermost parts of the earth. Give ear, then, my fellow countryman: God, the Creator of heaven and earth, now speaks to you in your own tongue."

Thus acted Martin Luther, as he stood upon the threshold of another, and somewhat more trying, series of actions in his eventful life. Thus did he from a quarter, personal to himself, and therefore whence he might have failed to be dispassionate, proclaim to all

men, of all ages, that for the maintenance of truth there should be no offensive strife; that there should be no vindictiveness of spirit; that while moral aggression should be made on error, that aggression should be purely moral; and that all its soldiers, in the spiritual warfare they might have to wage, need never doubt that its weapons, though not carnal but spiritual, must be mighty enough to pull down all strongholds of error, and to bring even every thought to obedience unto Christ.*

* Note 19.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE incidents in Martin Luther's life, which we have just detailed, came so rapidly as to forbid any interruption in narrating them; and thus we have been compelled to lose sight of what was meanwhile happening to the other persons in our tale.

When we last met with Count Arensberg, he was at Eisenach, on his journey, accompanied by his mother and the Lady Bianca, to the Court of the Elector Frederick. The news which reached him, some days after, of Martin Luther's sudden disappearance did not disconcert him; for he had previously gathered, from several sources, that the abduction of the great Reformer would be made by friendly hands. Neither did any other circumstance impede him in his progress; so that only a few days had elapsed before he reached Torgau, provided a suitable mansion for his family, and then placed himself in immediate attendance upon his Sovereign.

It was on one occasion when, as he left the audience-chamber, Count Arensberg was followed by the Secretary Spalatin, who placed in his hands a packet,

adding that he had that morning received it amid the despatches from the Elector's embassy at Rome. A glance at the cover told the Count that it came from no less a friend than Agostino Chigi, and it gave him joy. But a second glance was arrested at the black silk and the black seal that bound it.

He hastened home, full of strange and painful presentiments, and was in the act of repairing to his own private cabinet, for the purpose of reading in secret the ill-omened looking letter, when his pale and anxious face arrested the attention of his mother and the Lady Bianca, who, with Nina in attendance, were holding a merry conclave in the hall through which he passed.

"You are looking grave, yea, ill, Arensberg," said his mother. "Hath aught befallen you this afternoon? Ha!" she added, as her eye caught the packet he was carrying in his hand, "what, may I ask, can mean those black marks of mourning?"

"As yet, my mother, I know nothing of their import," returned Arensberg; "but I would learn them by myself; and you know I will not lose a moment in giving you a faithful statement of them, should they be of interest to either of you."

More than an hour had passed away, during which the ladies had been anxiously awaiting the Count's return from the adjoining cabinet, whence their quickened ears made them think they could detect smothered sighs and as low ejaculations. At length, Arensberg issued from his room, still paler than before

he entered it; and, seating himself upon a chair without uttering a word, placed the opened packet upon the table.

As eagerly as his obvious grief would let them, the ladies seized upon the letter.

It ran thus :—

“Rome, February 10th, 1521.

“Long ago you, Signor, must have heard of the loss which the whole universe has suffered. I knew you would be in grief, almost equal to mine own, but I could not write to you about it; indeed I could not. I have been in darkness ever since. The light of genius is round about me in abundance; but it is the light of moon and stars. Where is the sun? He has gone out. Ah, no, not gone out! for he must, I am sure, be shining somewhere. But his divine glory is eclipsed to me, and to all of us, for ever.

“How could I see to write to you amid such darkness!

“But my poor eyes are becoming accustomed to the moonlight; and I will write to you to tell you of the total, and, alas! alas! eternal eclipse.

“We have often talked together, and lamented over the delicate constitution of that body, in which such a heavenly Shechinah was enshrined. Oh! how often have I shuddered lest some cruel and sudden blast should extinguish it. The greater the triumph of his genius, the more we trembled, for we knew that his life hung upon the slightest thread. Cursed be those

Sister Fates who wove such a thread, and severed it! His frame was all spirit: it was its own fuel, it was self-infolding; it has been self-consumed.

“One day, Signor, he was working at his divine frescoes in my own palace; and I had but just entered that chamber of the which you may recollect; and he was turning round from his ladder to speak to me, with that infinite graciousness that so became him, and so showed how genius could condescend, and not feel that it was condescending, when a Court messenger came in suddenly, and commanded his instant attendance on the Pontiff. Miserable! as the event makes me say, he obeyed the summons of His Holiness *too* promptly. I am not the only one who says so; the Holy Father, who shed tears, bitter tears at his death, has said, and still says, it often. Raffaello would not wait for his carriage; he ran all the way to the Vatican without stopping. As you may be sure, he was all breathless and heated.

“God forgive the Holy Father for keeping him standing in one of the vast halls of the Vatican, whilst he was so worn and so heated! He caught a chill, which our infallible parent might have foreknown without much prescience; and he went home and died. Only thirty-seven years of age. You will not have been asking, ‘Of whom does Chigi speak?’ Who, save Raffaello, could be the sun in our firmament of genius? The glory of Michel Angelo might have shot off far away—strange, eccentric meteor as he is, grand at all times, yet at times grotesque

in his magnificence; but who, save Raffaello, ever was perfect sunlight, calm as it was luminous, and as steady as it was burning in its force?

"Your friend, and my friend, is dead.

"All this you must have known long ago, and nothing but my poor heart's demanding vent would have made me thus re-open your and mine own sorrows.

"It will give you a mournful pleasure to know some few circumstances that threw a halo of sublime sanctity around his death. You knew, before you left Rome, that he was engaged on a picture of 'The Transfiguration.' Marvellous genius! This did not make him abandon or treat slightly other grand creations of his pencil. He lived to finish it, with the exception of giving it a few last touches. Could you but see it, you, my friend, would acknowledge that in no other of his works has he approached so nearly to perfection.

"In the very apartment in which it still hung suspended on the scaffolding which supported it, there his body lay in state. What coincidence could be more grand! It would seem to be too appropriate to have been undesigned; yet I can assure you that it was so.

"Never, never shall I forget our woe that was thus made beautiful—divine. We needed not the painting to raise our thoughts to the glories of the invisible. Still it gave to them the highest elevation, and then, ah! me—there, close beside his bier, there lay his

pallet and his brush waiting for his hand, but to wait for ever!

“I thought of the beautiful passage in Pliny, where, speaking of some pictures which death had prevented a great artist from completing, he describes so well the sorrow we feel in praising them, and the regret of the spectator who seems to behold the pencil of the artist fall from his dying hand in the midst of his work.*

“He was buried in the Church of *Santa Maria de la Rotonda*, amid the lamentations of the whole city. Leo X. shed many tears at his death. ‘When he closed his eyes, art became blind,’ said one. ‘I fear nature is about to die,’ said another. ‘I am at Rome, but seem no longer there since my poor Raffaello is gone,’ exclaimed that most spiritual writer of our time—Baldassare Castiglione.

“But I must write on something else, yet about a something which is anything than foreign from the intent and the spirit of our divine Raffaello.

“I give you the following memoranda which were found upon his person, after his decease. Giulio Romano gave them to me (you know that Raffaello has made him one of his heirs), and why I send them to you I need not explain. I copy them verbatim: Giulio Romano will not let me send you the originals:—

“‘Saw his Holiness to-day. Deep in debt to me

* Note 20.

as he is, what can I do? Can I sue the sacred Pontiff? He offered me a Cardinal's hat in lieu of all his debts to me.*

““ At the Vatican to-day. His Holiness questioned me much, and with no little jealousy, about my Transfiguration picture. He spoke with a vehemence and a harshness which surprised me in one who hath been, uniformly, so self-collected and so mild in all his sayings. Asked him “Why is your Holiness so angry with the Cardinal de Medici? He only wishes for a painting for his cathedral at Narbonne.” Then came a sad scene, the particulars of which I will now record, and above all take care to remember. I wish my friend Arensberg was near me, so that I could tell him of it by word of mouth.

“““ You know his Excellency the Count Arensberg—I mean the Envoy whom the Elector Frederick sent to us last year,” demanded the Pontiff.

“““ Most assuredly: I know him well, your Holiness,” I answered.

“““ And is it possible that you, Raffaello—you, in whom ourselves have placed such unbounded confidence, and whom we have loved so warmly—you, whom we have ever deemed a pattern of devotion to the interests of the Church, is it possible that you abetted him in abducting the young Marchesa della Scala—a ward of the Holy See?”

““ I saw directly to whom I was indebted for this

* Note 21.

accusation, and for these words of bitterness—the first the Pontiff ever uttered to me. But that Cardinal can do me no further harm. Whether from fever or real grief, or chagrin, he has sickened and died.

“‘I was about to answer the Holy Father, hoping to mollify his wrath. But he stopped me short, and to my astonishment, though I had so often witnessed the sudden placableness of our amiable Pontiff, in words of kindness to myself. Would that he had been as forgiving towards Arensberg!’

““‘Answer us not, Raffaello,” he said. “We know full well what thy defence would be. Enough be it that we pardon and restore thee to our heart. Say not a word—not one—in favour of the guilty Count. Ah!” he exclaimed, and very harshly, “he thinks, perhaps, that the accursed Martin Luther can turn aside our thunderbolts! He shall see.”

“‘I confess, I tremble for my friend—not lest his Sovereign should give him up to the tender mercies of our Court, for Frederick, who beards us to the face in shielding Luther, will most surely never desert the Count. Yet, oh! what if he falls beneath a dread anathema! will it not wither him and his bride—if bride she has become?’

“Such, my friend, was the paper which Giulio Romano allowed me to copy. Months may have passed away, but do not forget that Rome is awake, though she may seem to slumber. Do not think that

because she may appear to be all absorbed in her wrath against your heretic monk you are overlooked. May God have you in his holy keeping, and give you wisdom! Thine,

“AGOSTINO CHIGI.”

While the ladies were intent upon this letter, Count Arensberg sat in silence, eagerly watching their countenances. Long before, he and they had mourned over the premature death of Raffaello; but this was the first direct communication they had received respecting it. The Countess herself, although she had had no personal knowledge of the illustrious artist, had learned to love him for his noble friendship for her son, and his chivalrous conduct towards the Lady Bianca. She, therefore, felt deeply distressed at the above details; but how much more did Bianca suffer! This Arensberg could read plainly upon her features, and his heart felt that their common sorrow more closely identified them together.

“You are pale, and sorrow-stricken, my love,” he said, “and at that I cannot wonder; for your note from Chigi brings back many a dreadful reminiscence. Yet wherefore, dearest, that look of sternness which I see upon thy countenance, so habitually mild and gentle?”

“And would you have me feel and express otherwise, my Arensberg?” was the answer. “Our Lady forgive me! for that insult, heaped on wrongs, has made me somewhat unmindful of the sad fate of

Raffaello—as bright though he was in friendship, as he was in genius. And what do I not owe him? but what, save scorn, would you have me feel at yon threat? Days there were, when a Pontiff's curse might have been of force and value; of what force or worth can they be to me? Arensberg," she asked solemnly, rising as she asked, "of what worth is the malediction of a Church, which made my noble, my pure-hearted father the scapegoat of its own crimes? You, and all men like you, bred as you have been in the court, as well as in the camp, must feel unutterable contempt for a policy, that can now be secular, and anon can assume religionism, just as it suits its purpose. And does his Holiness expect to frighten me by any woes that he can prophesy—predicting, as he may do, amidst the lying schemings of state papers?"

"God be praised you say so, dearest lady!" exclaimed Arensberg; "forgive me, that for one little moment I stood in dread, lest you might be alarmed at the possibility of our incurring St. Peter's curse."

"How can I answer you, dear Arensberg?" returned Bianca. "Nothing—yes, honestly can I say, nothing that I saw, nothing that I suffered, while at Rome, had power enough to unseat my confidence in her high—her apostolic claims. Her vices could not escape my notice, and her crimes rent my heart. Still, from some cause unknown, I felt, though I resisted it, a strange reluctance to pay her blind homage. And reflection, as it were of years, has come over me since then. Start not, Arensberg, I am not

going to abjure our Church—for that I am unprepared : nevertheless, much as I value her blessing, I can no longer fear Leo's threat."

"And the Pope's ban would be no obstacle?" demanded Arensberg eagerly.

"It would be an obstacle, my Arensberg," returned Bianca, with firmness: "it would make you wed a portionless maiden, and I should not be worthy of you, did I not bethink me of the terrible self-sacrifice you would have to make. There are hundreds of richly-dowered maidens, whom you, with your high rank, might woo and win."

It was some moments before Arensberg replied, for he felt deeply wounded.

"Have my ears deceived me, Bianca? Hath there ever, for one instant, crossed your thoughts, that my love was a case of sordid barter?"

"Now, again, as you have often done before, you wrong me, dear Arensberg," the lady answered; "but I will be more than even with you: your suspicion, which, from what you have said, it is plain you have entertained, is as groundless as a castle in the air; whereas I, from my longing for your happiness, see, too well, how much poverty would endanger it."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE night which she passed, after the above interview with Arensberg, had done little or nothing in the way of altering Bianca's conviction that it was her duty not to wed her lover, if the papal ban made herself portionless, and, at the same time, threatened him with spiritual vengeance. She reasoned with herself, moreover, that as yet the wise Elector Frederick had not directly sanctioned her residence within his dominions, though he had permitted it. On this point she was aware that Arensberg was especially anxious, as his reverence for, and love of, his immediate sovereign made him desirous neither to displease nor to embarrass him politically with the Court of Rome. It was, therefore, with a heavy heart that she received, on the following morning, the news that they were both summoned to a private and informal interview with his Highness.

The Elector was then at Lochau, one of those favourite castles to which he was accustomed to retreat from those Court pageantries to which he had ever a great aversion, and from those interruptions which

often and grievously interfered with his political deliberations.

During their short journey thither, the Count had repeatedly combated the reasonings of Bianca upon the subject of their projected union, but without success; and his hopelessness increased in proportion as he drew near to the presence of the Elector.

Accustomed, as she had been, to the most studied ceremonials, surrounded with every possible form of splendid ostentation, Bianca could barely conceal her surprise at the almost mean simplicity of the audience-chamber. She had expected somewhat, at least, of the gorgeous paraphernalia of a court; whereas, on the contrary, she saw nothing before her but rude furniture and bare walls. The Prince had a very abstracted air, and was seated at the head of a table, covered with green cloth, along the sides of which were ranged several secretaries, in the act of copying what seemed to her to be despatches.

But her surprise was soon forgotten in the frank and dignified courtesy with which he immediately rose to conduct her to an inner chamber; at the same time, after a most friendly greeting, inviting Count Arensberg to follow.

This same inner chamber might have increased her astonishment. It was even more scantily furnished than was the outer apartment. Yet, bare as were its walls and cornices of any kind of tapestry, tables, loaded with parchments, and books bound in the costliest vellums, together with cases of some of those

numerous relics which the great Prince, at a period before his mind had become enlightened, had collected with so much cost and trouble—all these revealed the tastes of its inhabitant, and the directions in which he chose to employ his wealth.

“The Marchesa della Scala will, we trust, excuse our receiving her in this informal manner,” said the Elector, “and our somewhat tardily bidding her welcome to our poor Saxony. But, to lay aside Court language, and to speak with the frank and friendly feeling which we entertain for one so dear to our esteemed and valued friend, Count Arensberg—you, fair lady, must have been well aware that it would not further your interests for us to have needlessly given offence to the Sovereign Pontiff. God wotteth,” continued the Elector gravely, “we have already, it seems, laid ourselves open to much suspicion, by refusing to imprison, or basely give up to the power of the Roman See, Dr. Martin Luther, who appears to us to be contending for truth against error, purity against corruption, although his manner of doing so be somewhat rugged. Think you not so, my Lord Count?”

Without waiting for Arensberg’s reply, he continued—“But let not the Marchesa della Scala doubt that she has had our truest sympathy in all the sorrows she has undergone; and we would now hear from her own lips what may be her wishes as to her future.”

It was only after a great effort to command her

feelings that Bianca, without daring to look in the direction of her lover, lest a glance from him might unseat her purpose, answered,—

“May it please your Electoral Grace, nothing could be farther from my wishes than to embroil your Grace with the Court of the Holy Father. Suffer me to add,” she continued, in a tone very firm, yet modest, “as your Grace invites me to speak out my wishes frankly, I would ask your permission to betake myself to some retired spot in your dominions, where my abode would be unknown, and where, under your powerful protection, I could feel I was in safety.”

“So!” exclaimed the Elector, in surprise; and he looked first at Arensberg, and then at Bianca, wonderingly. But he could detect in neither face any such marks of discrepancy between the two, as this strange wish of the latter began to make him surmise.

“We thought, lady,” answered Frederick, “that you had intended to reward the chivalrous conduct of our friend Arensberg with the boon of your fair hand. We hoped, too, that by such graciousness, you would have enabled him to add to his other services to his Sovereign, by adorning our poor Saxon Court with one whose personal graces we are now blessed with opportunity for appreciating, and of whose accomplishments report speaks so highly. And was not this your hope, Arensberg?”

The Count, in his turn, was surprised. This was

the first time that Frederick had made to him the slightest allusion to his proposed marriage, although he had often conversed with him on the subject of Bianca's wrongs. The Prince had uniformly insisted on the political perplexities that might arise from his own Envoy having abducted a subject of the Papal See—one, too, whose father had been arraigned for even treason against the person of the Holy Father. Count Arensberg knew from the Secretary Spalatin, that confidential despatches had recently arrived from Rome, and he could not help auguring that they bore favourably upon the Lady Bianca's position at the Papal Court.

He, however, merely replied,—

“Your Grace is well aware that it has been the most cherished hope I have on earth. But, alas! the Lady Bianca so far misdoubts the disinterested character of my love as not to be willing to accept my hand, unless her fair domains in Italy be restored to her by a decree of Pope Leo.”

“Nay,” said Bianca, interrupting him, “it is not only or chiefly that I would not as a dowerless bride become a burden on the house of Arensberg; but still less could I desire to bring shame on the noble Count, to whom I owe so much. I cannot forget that as yet I am branded as the daughter of one who was arraigned for a fearful crime—of one, may it please your Grace,” she continued, her colour rising as she spoke, “who was murdered by slow torture and imprisonment, upon a charge as false as was the villany

of his accuser. Oh! could your Highness but know what happiness it would be to me, after all the misery of the past, to become the wife of one in whose truth and honour I could so perfectly confide, and to reside in this your happy realm, where faithful subjects are not made the victims of state policy, your Grace would feel assured that Count Arensberg could need no advocate with my heart. Only let the vile aspersions on the fair fame of the Marchese della Scala be wiped away but until then I have vowed a vow I am sure your Highness would not advise the breach of it."

The Elector, for awhile lost in admiration of her most noble, but modestly avowed purpose, remained silent.

At length he answered,—

"The wish to vindicate the name of a lost parent is indeed a holy one, and a vow to that effect we for one would never combat. But see here, fair lady," and he unrolled some papers that lay on an adjoining table, "see here, and you will find we have given you some help to the fulfilment of your sacred purpose. Though, to all appearance, we may have been indifferent to the interests that affected yourself and our right trustful friend and servant Arensberg,—look you here. These are documents which we have obtained even from the Pope himself. Perchance," he added, smiling, "this may be the first time the Marchesa della Scala has been called upon to ponder over the despatches of a government."

With what eagerness did Bianca read them ! Meanwhile, with considerate kindness, the Elector, giving a silent intimation to Arensberg to follow, drew off to a distant embrasure in the apartment.

Blessed moments were they to the devoted orphan, while her eyes ran, devouringly, over those papers. Marked with every seal necessary to give them authenticity, they told that the Cardinal * * * *, finding himself sinking in his last illness, had confessed to Father Francis, and authorized him to divulge to Leo the part he had shared in the false crimination of the Marchese della Scala. So earnest had been the Cardinal to discharge this solemn effort to repair, as far as possible, his sin, that he placed his signature to the statement which the Priest drew up under his direction. And now Bianca was holding in her own hands that very parchment, which exonerated her heroic father from each and every charge of even the slightest complicity with the conspirators against the person of the Pontiff.

Then followed other papers: one was in the handwriting of the Duke d'Urbino himself, full of the most significant and trustworthy proofs of the unstained honour of his old opponent-in-arms, the Marchese. Another paper bore the seal of the penitent Cardinal Adrian. It purported to have been written on the eve of his retirement* from the world, into one of the strictest of the monastic houses ; and it, also, went to exonerate her father.

* Note 22.

Finally, another paper, the most valuable, and, at the same time, the most heart-touching of all, was a free and full offering to the memory of his faithful soldier, from Leo X. himself; and it contained the most affecting references to the zeal with which Raffaello and Agostino Chigi had exerted themselves in the assertion and proof of the innocence of their deceased friend.

Then there followed his Holiness's gracious recognition of all the temporal heritages of the young Marchesa, and his benediction upon, what he presumed to be in prospect, her marriage with Count Arensberg.

"Now, have we not a right to a knight's guerdon, dear lady?" asked Frederick, on his coming forth from the embrasure, to which, from delicacy of feeling, he had retired with Arensberg, in order to leave the Lady Bianca to an unobserved indulgence of her emotions while she was reading papers so momentous to herself.

The Elector's pleasantry suddenly stopped short; for Bianca, unable to repress her joy, was exclaiming, "My father! my father! thy fame has at last been cleared; God be thanked—God be thrice-praised!"

Throwing herself at the Prince's feet, and overcome by her ecstasy of gratitude, she could only, in broken accents, sob forth her gratitude.

The Elector, instantly raising her from her kneeling attitude, led her to her seat, and taking one of her hands, placed it in the right one of Count Arensberg.

“ So good a daughter,” he said, “ will make as good a wife. ‘ The first commandment with promise,’ that which pledges that Heaven will honour those who do honour to their parents, will be your warranty for happiness, indeed. May it ever enrich you, fair lady, and also Arensberg ; now you need break no vow by your marriage, and we ourselves will be present at your nuptials. Let them be celebrated with all speed at the Castle of Arensberg, for the Court of Rome is somewhat slippery to deal with. A consent has been obtained from the Pontiff, who is anxious to conciliate us at present, hoping to induce us to give up Dr. Martin Luther. But if you, lady, adhere to your determination not to return to Rome, Leo may retract his consent. Let us, therefore, avail ourselves of it at once ; I will myself, Arensberg, claim the privilege of giving the Marchesa della Scala to you. I am about to return to Wittemberg : let the earliest day be appointed.”

The Count and Bianca quitted the kind Prince’s presence with gratitude. The Count joyfully undertook to inform his mother of all that so happily transpired, and to make every arrangement for returning immediately to his castle.

It was soon arranged that Count Arensberg should proceed home immediately, and that Bianca and his brother, Theresa and their attendants, should follow more slowly.

Suffice it to say, that the marriage was celebrated with becoming splendour at the private chapel of the

Elector; that he himself gave the bride away; and that a high dignitary of the Romish Church performed the ceremony; that the bride was, by Theresa's jealous care, bedecked with all the splendour that befitted her rank; and that her new-born happiness irradiated her beauty with a new character. Rupert and Mellen-dorf were the bridegroom's brides'-men on this occasion. Nina, too, was there in attendance on Bianca, who urged this request, in ignorance of the martyrdom she was inflicting on her humble friend. Nina never married. Vainly did Schwärtz urge and re-urge his suit; she was too conscientious to marry where she felt she could not love; and her earnest zeal in propagating the principles of the Reformation, fully engrossed her mind, and prevented that aching void that disappointed affections sometimes create.

Long and happily did Bianca and Arensberg live together; but though they occasionally visited Rome, they never again resided there.

Count Arensberg slowly, but finally, embraced Lutheranism, and did his utmost in the stirring events that followed, to assist the cause of the Reformation.

THE END.

NOTES TO VOL. II.

NOTES TO VOL. II.

NOTE 1, page 10.

“Bembo,* an exceeding learned man, who had thoroughly investigated Rome, said : Rome is a filthy, stinking puddle, full of the wickedest wretches in the world ; and he wrote thus :—

“Vivere qui sancte, discedite Româ ;
Omnia hic ecce licent, non licet esse probum.”

Luther's Table Talk, dcccclxxxviii.

NOTE 2, page 21.

“Gaspar Cruciger, one of the contributors to the Reformation in Germany, was born at Leipsic, 1504 ; died 1548. He published Commentaries on the Gospel of St. John, the Epistles to Timothy, and the Psalms, in German. Enarrationes in duos articulos Symboli Niceni.—De Judiciis piorum Synodorum Sen-

* Pietro Bembo and Jacopo Sadoleti were the two pontifical secretaries of Leo X., and were justly esteemed two of the first scholars of the age.

tentia, initio Enarrationis Symboli Niceni exposita. Witteb. 1548, 8vo.—Enarrationes in Evangelium Johannis. Arg. 1564, 8vo.—Oratio de Ordine Discendi. Some of these are printed among Melancthon's Works."

NOTE 3, page 25.

"Un jour, que Luther était devant le cloître des Augustins, un étranger, qui tenait un pistolet caché dans sa manche, l'aborda, et lui dit: 'Pourquoi allez, vous ainsi tout seul?'—'Je suis dans les mains de Dieu,' répondit Luther; 'Il est ma force et mon bouclier. Que peut me faire l'homme mortel?' La dessus, cet inconnu pâlit, et s'enfuit en tremblant."—See D'Aubigne, vol. ii. p. 80.

NOTE 4, page 28.

"Luther's principal friends among the nobility were Silvester Von Schauenberg, Von Sickengen, Taubenheim, and Ulrich Von Hutten. Schauenberg had confided the education of his young son to Melancthon, and offered to assist the Elector of Saxony with troops, in the event of his becoming involved in any danger from his advocacy of the cause of the Reformation. Taubenheim, and others, sent money to Luther. 'I have received,' he says, 'a hundred gold pieces sent me by Taubenheim; Schart has given me fifty more; and I begin to fear lest God should pay me here, instead of hereafter; but I have already protested that I must not be thus gorged with money, or I should be fain to throw it all up again.'—See Opera Luth. vi. 544.

NOTE 5, page 29.

"I have often conversed with Melancthon, and related to him my whole life, from point to point. I am the son of a peasant; my father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather, were all mere peasants. My father went to Mansfeldt, and became a miner there. It was there I was born. That I was afterwards to become bachelor of arts, doctor of divinity, and what not, was assuredly not written in the stars, at least not to ordinary readers. How I astonished everybody when I turned monk! and, again, when I exchanged the brown cap for another. These things greatly vexed my father, nay, made him quite ill for the time."—See Luther's Table Talk, ccxl.

NOTE 6, page 39.

See *Epistolæ Celeberrimorum Vivorum ex Scriniis Literariis Jani Brantii*. Amst. 1715. Also, Michelet, p. 60.

NOTE 7, page 53.

All was not animation and triumph for the Reformer. Behind the car, in which an aroused and admiring people drew him, there was not wanting an attendant slave, charged to recall to him his misery. Staupitz, whom he called his father, appeared thunderstruck. The Pope had accused him, and Staupitz declared

himself ready to submit to the judgment of His Holiness. "I fear," said Luther to him, "that in accepting the Pope for judge, not that you may appear to reject me and the doctrines which I have maintained. If Christ loves you, he will constrain you to recall your letter. Christ is condemned, stripped, blasphemed against: this is the time not to tremble, but to raise our voice. This is why, while you exhort me to humility, I exhort you to boldness; for you have too much humility, as I have too much fierceness. They will call me insolent, avaricious, adulterous, an homicide, an anti-papist. Be it so! provided they cannot reproach me with keeping an impious silence at the moment when the Lord exclaims, with grief, '*I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me.*' The word of Jesus Christ is a word, not of peace, but of a sword. If you will not follow Jesus Christ, I myself will march alone; I will assail alone; and I will seize the place."—See Luth. Epp. i. p. 558.

NOTE 8, page 61.

"La dispute de Leipzig ne devait pourtant pas s'évanouir en fumée. Toute œuvre faite avec dévouement porte ses fruits. Les paroles de Luther avaient pénétré avec une puissance irrésistible dans l'esprit de ses auditeurs. Plusieurs de ceux qui, chaque jour, avaient rempli la salle du château furent subjugués par la vérité. Ce fut même au milieu de ses adversaires les plus prononcés qu'elle fit surtout des conquêtes. Le secrétaire du docteur Eck, son familier, son disciple, Poliandre, fut gagné à la réforme, et des l'an 1522 il prêcha publiquement l'Evangile à Leipzig. Jean Cellarius, professeur d'Hébreu, l'un des hommes les plus opposés à la réforme, saisi par les paroles du puissant docteur, commença à sonder davantage la sainte écriture. Bientôt il quitta sa place, et, plein d'humilité, vint étudier à Wittemberg, aux pieds de Luther. Il fut plus tard pasteur à Francfort et à Dresde.

“Ce fut surtout par les étudiants que les paroles de Luther furent reçues avec enthousiasme. Ils sentirent la différence qu’il y avait entre l’esprit et la vie du docteur de Wittemberg et les distinctions sophistiques, les spéculations vaines du chancelier d’Ingoldstadt. Ils voyaient Luther s’appuyant sur la Parole de Dieu. Ils voyaient le docteur Eck ne se fondant que sur les traditions des hommes. L’effet fut prompt. Les auditoires de l’université de Leipzig se vidèrent presque après la dispute. Une circonstance y contribua : la peste semblait s’y déclarer. Mais il était bien d’autres universités, Erfurt, Ingoldstadt, par exemple, où les étudiants auraient pu se rendre. La force de la vérité les attira à Wittemberg. Le nombre des étudiants y doubla.”—See Peifer *Histor. Lipsiensis*, 356. Also, D’Aubigne, vol. ii. pp. 58, 60.

NOTE 9, page 71.

“In this state of things there was no more question about genuine Christian sentiments and convictions. Far from that, these now began to be directly impugned.

“The schools of philosophy began to dispute whether the reasonable soul were immaterial and immortal, but still the same in all men; or if it were not, in one word, mortal. Peter Pompanazzo, the foremost of the philosophers of that day, distinguished himself in maintaining the last of these propositions. He compared himself to Prometheus, whose heart was pecked by the vulture, for having attempted to steal his fire from Jupiter. But with all his painful efforts, and all his acuteness, he could attain to no further result ‘than that when the legislator pronounced the soul immortal, he did not trouble himself about the truth.’

“We have no ground to believe that this opinion was either confined to a few or held secret. Erasmus was confounded at the blasphemies he heard; it was even attempted to prove to him, a foreigner, out of Pliny, that there was no difference between the

souls of men and those of beasts. While the common people were sinking into an almost heathenish superstition, which saw its salvation in ill-grounded merit of works, the higher classes took an irreligious direction. How amazed was young Luther on his coming into Italy! At the very moment that the sacrifice of the mass was about to close, the priests ridiculed it by giving utterance to blasphemies.

"In Rome it was reckoned a piece of good breeding to impugn the fundamental principles of Christianity. 'One no longer passes,' says P. Anth. Bandino, 'for an accomplished person, who does not entertain wrong views of Christianity.' At court, the ordinances of the Roman Catholic Church, and texts from Holy Scripture, were never spoken of but with a sneer: the mysteries of the faith were treated with contempt." — Ranke's *History of the Papacy*, vol. i. p. 64.

NOTE 10, page 74.

"Eck rencontra donc de puissants obstacles. Il ne négligea rien pour empêcher des concessions impies. Parcourant Rome, il exhalait sa colère et criait vengeance. Le parti fanatique des moines se ligua promptement avec lui. Fort de cette alliance, il assaillit avec un nouveau courage et le pape et les cardinaux. Selon lui, tout essai de conciliation était inutile. Ce sont là, disait-il, de vains rêves dont on se berce dans le lointain. Il connaît le pévil, car il a lutté avec ce moine audacieux. Il sait qu'il faut se hâter de couper ce membre gangrené, de peur que le mal n'envahisse tout le corps. Le fougueux combattant de Leipzig résout objection, et a de la peine à persuader le pape. Il veut sauver Rome malgré Rome elle-même. Il met tout en œuvre. Il pape des heures entières en délibération dans le cabinet du pontife. Il remue et la cour et les cloîtres, et le peuple et l'église.

"Eck conjure les abûnes des abûnes contre moi, disait Luther ;

il met le feu aux forêts du Liban." A la fin, il l'emporte. Les politiques sont vaincus par les fanatiques dans les conseils de la papauté. Leon cede. La condamnation de Luther est résolue. Eck respire. Son orgueil se complaît dans le pensée que c'est lui qui a décidé la ruine de son hérétique rival, et qui a ainsi sauvé l'église. " Il était bon, dit-il, que je vinsse en ce temps à Rome, car on y connaît peu les erreurs de Luther. On apprendra un jour ce que j'ai fait dans cette cause."—See D'Aubigne, vol. ii. p. 103. Also, Eckü Epistola, l. ii. p. 48.

NOTE 11, page 126.

When the bull of condemnation arrived in Germany, it found a whole nation in a state of ebullition. At Erfurt, the students took it from the booksellers' shops, tore it in pieces, and threw it into the water, saying, with more vehemence than point, " It is a bull; let us see if it can swim." Luther at once sent forth a pamphlet, *Against the execrable Bull of Antichrist*. On the 10th of December, 1520, he publicly burnt the Pope's anathema at the gates of the town, amid the exulting shouts of the people; and on the same day wrote to Spalatin, his ordinary medium of communication with the Elector: " Thursday, the tenth of December, in the year 1520, at nine o'clock in the morning, were burnt at Wittemberg, at the east gate, opposite the Church of the Holy Cross, all the Pope's books, the rescripts, the decretals of Clement VI., the extravagants, the new bull of Leo X., the *Somma Angelica*, the *Chrysopasus* of Eck, and some other productions of his, and of Emser's. This is something new, I wot." He adds, in the report he drew up on the subject, " if any one asks me why I act thus, I will answer him, that it is an old custom to burn bad books. The Apostles burned books to the value of five thousand deniers."

According to the tradition, he said, on throwing the book of

the decretals into the flames : "Thou hast afflicted the holy of the Lord ; may eternal fire afflict thee, and consume thee !" — See Luth. Opera, (L.) ii. 52 ; also Michelet's Life of Luther, p. 64.

NOTE 12, page 132.

This was one of the many instances in which Martin Luther played forth a humour which, though always genuine in its homeliness, sometimes reached to true wit.

In this instance he indulged himself in a pun. The Latin word "bulla," amid its other significations, sometimes means "a bubble," which, while floating down a stream, suddenly evaporates.

NOTE 13, page 177.

See Lutheri Opera, tom ii. p. 412 ; also, Roscoe's Life of Leo X., Appendix clxxxviii.

NOTE 14, page 186.

"On the 16th of April, Luther came in sight of Worms ; and at once, on beholding its old bell-towers, he arose in his chariot, and began to sing the hymn, of which it is said he had improvised the words and the music two days before at Oppenheim—the Marseillaise of the Reformation."—See Michelet's Life of Luther, p. 80.

Luther passed nearly the whole night at his window ; some-

times meditating, with earnestly upcast eyes; sometimes breathing the air of his hymn upon his flute.

The following is the original of this noble hymn. The translation appended is derived from *Fraser's Magazine* :—

■ Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott,
 Ein' gute Wehr und Waffen.
 Er hilft uns frei aus aller Noht,
 Die uns jetzt hat betroffen.
 Der alt böse Feind
 Mit Ernst er's jetzt meint;
 Gross' Macht und viel List
 Sein' grausam Rüstung ist'.
 Auf Erd' ist nicht seins' Gleichen.

“ Mit unser Macht ist nichts gethan,
 Wir sind gar bald velohren;
 Es streit für uns der rechte Mann,
 Den Gott selbst hat erkoren.
 Fragst du, wer er ist?
 Er heisst Jesus Christ,
 Der Herr Zebaoth;
 Und ist kein andrer Gott,
 Das Feld muss er behalten.

“ Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär,
 Und wollt uns gar verschlingen,
 So fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,
 Es soll uns doch gelingen;
 Der Fürst dieser welt,
 Wie sau'r er sich stellt,
 Thut er uns doch nichts;
 Das Macht, er ist gericht't.
 Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.

“ Das Wort sie sollen lassen stehn,
 Un kein Dank darzu baben;
 Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan
 Mit seinem Geist und Gaben.

Nehm'n sie uns den Leib,
Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib,
Lass fahren dahin,
Sie haben kein Gewinn ;
Das Reich muss uns doch bleiben."

NOTE 15, page 218.

See *Lutheri Opera*, (L.) xvii., p. 589.

NOTE 16, page 238.

See "Luther : or, Rome and the Reformation," by Robert Montgomery, M.A., pp. 150-164.

NOTE 17, page 245.

" C'est dans ce château élevé et isole, nommé la Wartbourg, où se cachaient jadis les anciens landgraves, que l'on conduit Luther. Les verrous se tirent, les barres de fer tombent, les portes s'ouvrent ; le réformateur franchit le seuil ; les battants se referment sur lui. Il descend de cheval dans une cour. L'un des cavaliers Burkard de Hund, seigneur d'Altenstein, se retire ; un autre, Jean de Berlepsch, prévôt de la Wartbourg, conduit le docteur dans la chambre qui doit être sa prison, et où se trouvent disposés un vêtement de chevalier et une épée. Les trois autres chevaliers, qui dépendent du prévôt, lui enlèvent ses habits ecclésiastiques et le revêtent du costume équestre qu'on lui a

préparé, en lui enjoignant de laisser croître sa barbe et sa chevelure afin que nul dans le château même ne puisse savoir qu'il est. Les gens de la Wartbourg ne doivent connaître le prisonnier que sous le nom du chevalier George. Luther, sous le vêtement qu'on lui imposé, a peine à se reconnaître lui-même."—D'Aubigne, tom. ii. p. 284.

NOTE 18, page 261.

"On hearing of Luther's departure from the Wartburg, the Elector had despatched Schurff to meet him, and persuade him to return, or at least to furnish him with an explanation of his conduct, which he might show to the Emperor. In his answer to the Elector, dated 7th March, Luther gives three reasons for his proceeding: first, that the church of Wittenberg had earnestly solicited his return; secondly, that disorder had crept in among his flock; thirdly, that he wished to avert, as far as in him lay, the insurrection which he regarded as threatening the country.

"'I have been called,' he says, 'and I will go: time presses: let destiny be accomplished, in the name of Jesus Christ, master of life and death. Satan, during my absence, has penetrated into my fold, and committed ravages there which my presence alone can repair. A letter would answer no purpose; I must make use of my own eyes, and my own mouth, to see and to speak. My conscience will permit me to make no longer delay, and rather than act against that, I would incur the anger of your electoral grace, and of the whole world. The Wittenbergers are my sheep, whom God has entrusted to my care; they are my children in the Lord. For them I am ready to suffer martyrdom. I go, therefore, to accomplish, by God's grace, that which Christ demands of those who own him. If my written word sufficed to drive away this great ill, do you think they would send for me thus urgently? I will die rather than delay any longer; die for the salvation of my neighbour, as becomes me.'"—See Luth. Epp. ii. p. 143.

NOTE 19, page 275.

See Luth. Opp. (L.) xviii. p. 255.

NOTE 20, page 281.

“Raffaello Sanzio was of a refined and most delicate constitution: his life, from its outset, had hung upon the smallest thread; his frame was all spirit; his physical strength so limited, that it was a wonder he existed so long as he did. Thus weak of body, while working one day in the Farnesina, he received the command to repair to court. Prompt to obey, he instantly proceeded thither, without waiting for his equipage, and ran all the way to the Vatican without stopping. When he arrived he was all breathless, and perspired profusely; and, standing for a long time in this condition in one of the vast halls, talking with the Pope about the progress of St. Peter's, he felt a sudden chill throughout his whole person; and, on returning home, was seized with a fever, which ended in death.”—*Life of Raffaello*, by Quatremere De Quincy, p. 411, note.

NOTE 21, page 282.

See Note 4, vol. i. p. 212; also, Vasari, *Vit. di Raffaello*, iii. 225, and Frederic Zuccaro, *Let. pitt.*, vi. 129.

NOTE 22, page 293.

See Note 2, vol. i. p. 24.

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